

© 2013 Doyoung Park

A VEHICLE OF SOCIAL MOBILITY: UTILITARIAN FACTORS IN THE RISE OF NEO-  
CONFUCIANISM IN THE EARLY TOKUGAWA PERIOD

BY

DOYOUNG PARK

DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History  
in the Graduate College of the  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2013

Urbana, Illinois

Doctoral Committee:

Professor Ronald P. Toby, Chair  
Professor Kai-Wing Chow  
Associate Professor Craig M. Koslofsky  
Associate Professor Brian Ruppert

### Abstract

This dissertation explores the utilitarian aspects of the Neo-Confucianism's rise in the early Tokugawa period. Neo-Confucianism was an important intellectual foundation for political leaders because it served as the cultural medium of Chinese civilization. Since the Kamakura period, Zen monks had monopolized access to Neo-Confucian scholarship to enjoy exclusive political patronage. However, Fujiwara Seika, a Neo-Confucian convert from Zen, changed this situation. He established a private school to train a younger generation of Neo-Confucianists in Kyoto. His school liberated the access to Neo-Confucianism from Zen Buddhism's institutional grip and expanded the pool of Neo-Confucianism's followers. Soon, the leaders of Tokugawa politics increased recruitment of Neo-Confucianists to the detriment of Zen monks since the shogunate's hiring of Hayashi Razan. Some previous scholars have regarded this hiring wave as a sign of Neo-Confucianism's ideological triumph over Buddhism in Tokugawa politics. However, this dissertation disputes that idea and suggests that Tokugawa leaders preferred Neo-Confucianists because they were more accessible, professional, and economically effective than Zen monks. Successful role models like Razan stimulated the mind of commoners and *rōnin*, both of whom had lost vehicles of social mobility after Hideyoshi's separation of peasants and samurai. With the ambition to enhance their social status, commoners found Neo-Confucian scholarship a useful vehicle for social mobility, and these utilitarian motives spread the increasing preference of Neo-Confucianism throughout Tokugawa Japan society.

### Acknowledgements

My journey to the finish line of this dissertation owed many things to many people. I would not complete this project without the support from my teachers, colleagues, and family. Most of all, I am grateful to Dr. Fujiya Kawashima (1938-2006) who advised me in the M.A. program of Bowling Green State University. He helped me to adapt myself to American academia literally from the scratch. Although he passed away in 2006, his memory still lives in my mind.

Since I joined the PhD program in UIUC, I owed a great deal to Dr. Ronald P. Toby, my academic advisor. He showed me, in person, what a researcher is supposed to be and how a teacher should be. I know I can never realize the full extent of his insight and passion as a historian and an educator, but I will not stop following his teachings. I also thank Dr. Brian Ruppert, Dr. Kai-Wing Chow, and Dr. Craig M. Koslofsky for their devotion as the member of my dissertation committee.

In my graduate school career, I have met many wonderful people. Among them, I especially thank to Akira Shimizu, Lawrence Chang, and David Stramecky, my best colleagues, for their support and friendship.

The progress of my project was accelerated by the field research in Japan during 2007 and 2008. While I practiced my research as the international research student of Graduate School of Law and Political Science in the University of Tokyo, I learned many things from Prof. Watanabe Hiroshi. I have to confess that the detailed blueprint of my project was built based on his magnum opus, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*.

While finishing the draft of my dissertation, I relied on Prof. Stephen Dalton of Osaka Gakuin University, Prof. Andrew Kamei-Tyche of Kanda University of International

Studies, and Ms. Lauren Nakasato, Osaka Resident Director of CET Academic Programs, to revise and edit my writings. I appreciate their wisdom.

I also want to express deep gratitude to my family- they make my life worth living. I would not achieve anything without the support from my mother, Insook Kim and the lessons from my father, Chulhwan Park (1940-2005). My Son, Tyler Takaya Jungwon Park always encourages me to be a proud father.

In conclusion, I should like to end my words of gratitude by referring to the most special person in my life, Tomomi Kumai, my wife. She has never stopped supporting, trusting, and loving me since November 24, 2001, the day we first met. I dedicate this dissertation to Tomomi with my best love and respect.

\* This dissertation project was funded by Japanese Studies Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship from Japan Foundation in 2007-08.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| INTRODUCTION .....  | 1   |
| CHAPTER 1: A NEO-CONFUCIAN CONVERT FROM ZEN BUDDHISM..... | 23  |
| CHAPTER 2: REVISITING SEIKA'S CONVERSION .....            | 51  |
| CHAPTER 3: CONVERSION AS MARKETING .....                  | 82  |
| CHAPTER 4: RISE OF PROFESSIONAL NEO-CONFUCIANISTS.....    | 127 |
| CONCLUSION .....  | 174 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY .....  | 191 |

## **Introduction**

One of the most striking features of Japanese intellectual history in the Tokugawa period was the emergence of Neo-Confucianism as the mainstream intellectual tradition. Neo-Confucianism first arrived in Japan during the late Kamakura Period (1185-1333), but it only emerged into the limelight from the late sixteenth century. It had remained in incubation for some 300 years because prior to the Tokugawa period, Neo-Confucianism was studied not for its own sake, but merely as an intellectual exercise within the larger framework of Rinzai Zen Buddhist training. In contrast to both Chosŏn-dynasty Korea and Ming-dynasty China, Neo-Confucianism did not exist independently as an intellectual calling in Japan, nor was it fostered by the state through institutions like the civil service examination.

Meanwhile, in the Tokugawa period, some Zen Buddhists switched their affiliation to become full-time professional Neo-Confucians. Private academies they established expanded the population committed to Confucianism in the public sphere, and both the central and provincial leaders in Tokugawa politics hired Confucian scholars as their intellectual assistants. Neo-Confucianism had been the major philosophical paradigm in East Asia and the establishment of Neo-Confucianism as an independent intellectual tradition signifies that Japan was finally able to join the East Asian intellectual league that had communicated in the Neo-Confucian concepts.

Why, then, did the 300-year incubation of Neo-Confucianism in Japan hatch in the Tokugawa period? This question should be the beginning point of the research on Neo-Confucianism in Japan which many previous scholars have attempted to answer.

Previous scholarship has examined this issue within a philosophical paradigm. Some scholars have argued that the philosophical value of Neo-Confucianism was the most significant factor that enabled the emergence of Neo-Confucianism as the major intellectual trend of Tokugawa Japan.

For instance, Maruyama Masao suggested that Neo-Confucianism became popular because early Tokugawa Japan, a newly unified but still unstable society, needed a metaphysical ideology which would provide a stabilizing effect, and that Neo-Confucianism was well-suited to satisfy that need.<sup>1</sup> Before the Tokugawa period, Japanese politics had conventionally maintained a close relationship with Buddhism, and thus the rise of Neo-Confucian scholarship has also been interpreted as a political and ideological victory of Confucianism over Buddhism in Japan. David Dilworth asserts that Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616), the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, decided to shift spiritual authority from Buddhism to the metaphysical and humanistic thought of Neo-Confucianism.<sup>2</sup> This ideological perspective dominated both Japanese and Euro-American academia until the 1980s.

While this theory was long accepted as axiomatic, later scholars such as Watanabe Hiroshi, Jan Boot and Herman Ooms challenged it. They argue, respectively, that Neo-Confucianism did not function as a state ideology, and that its actual impact on Japanese

---

<sup>1</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1956), 29-30.

<sup>2</sup> David Dilworth, "Jitsugaku as an Ontological Conception: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early and Mid-Tokugawa Thought," in *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 476.



politics was far less significant than had heretofore been assumed. Maruyama also later revised this account in the preface for the English translated edition of his work that Neo-Confucianism became dominant only after the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, where he continued to confine his concept of Neo-Confucianism within the paradigm of the state ideology.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Watanabe Hiroshi argues that Neo-Confucianism neither served as the state ideology nor dominated the way of thinking in Tokugawa society, because the Tokugawa regime did not establish political institutions based on Confucianism, such as Confucian rituals nor a civil service examination for officialdom.<sup>4</sup>

Boot argues that there was no compatibility between Neo-Confucianism and the socio-political structure of Tokugawa Japan. According to him, Japanese feudal society was quite different from the Chinese counterpart. Neo-Confucianism can be an explosive doctrine when it works as the means of individual self-cultivation which fulfills the political demand of official candidates with a cultivated mind, but Japan did not have a system for it.<sup>5</sup>

Ooms occupies a similar position, arguing that Neo-Confucianism received less recognition from the Tokugawa shogunate than did Shinto or Buddhism. For example, the

---

<sup>3</sup> Maruyama Masao, “Eigoban eno chosha no jobun,” in *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004), 377-404

<sup>4</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Willem Jan Boot, “The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan: The Role of Fujiwara Seika and Hayashi Razan” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 1983), 2.

shogunate's official funding for Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples far exceeded that afforded to the Neo-Confucian academy.<sup>6</sup>

While later research also argues that Neo-Confucianism did not serve as the state ideology of Tokugawa Japan, a question still remains. What was Neo-Confucianism to Tokugawa Japan if it was not the state ideology? With the collapse of the framework focusing on ideological matters this explanation disintegrates and we need to return to the issue anew.

Watanabe offers persuasive arguments on this question. He argues that the shogunate accepted Neo-Confucianism for cultural reasons. He interprets the popularity of Neo-Confucianism as the result of the intellectual desire to learn advanced culture from China, rather than purely philosophical fascination. He also states that Japanese preferred Neo-Confucianism to other scholarship not because Neo-Confucianism was philosophically superior to other thought systems, but because it was mainstream scholarship in Ming-China and Chosŏn-Korea. Watanabe posits that Neo-Confucianism spread to the public in the early Tokugawa period for two reasons. First, he argues that the people who had both money and time such as rich merchants in Edo paid attention to Neo-Confucian scholarship to foster their knowledge of humane studies. Second, Neo-Confucianism was the most authoritative scholarship which came from China, the recognized as the most advanced civilization, and Japanese had habitually relied on “foreign books” when they required the intellectual authority.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Herman Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 75.

<sup>7</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*, 13.

It is true that the majority of the students studying at the Neo-Confucian private academies that sprang up in the seventeenth century, such as Noma Sanchiku (1608-76), who studied with Matsunaga Sekigo (1592-1657) to become an official physician working for the shogunate, came from rich physician or merchant families.<sup>8</sup>

However, Watanabe overlooks the fact that economically marginalized people also studied to become Neo-Confucianists. According to Unoda Shōya, there were many Confucian scholars in the Tokugawa period who had to run other businesses to earn a living while they pursued *gakumon* (scholarship)<sup>9</sup> and their economic level was not that high.<sup>10</sup> Why did these economically marginalized people pursue Neo-Confucian scholarship?

As alternative answers to the question, some scholars have responded by shifting their perspective from the macro-level issue of state ideology to concerns with individual ethics. Kate Nakai states that the salient feature of the history of Confucianism in the early Tokugawa period is the significant increase in the number of people who adopted the way of the Confucian sages as a personal code.<sup>11</sup> She implies that the increasing number of people who accepted Neo-Confucianism as their personal creed of ethics during the early Tokugawa Period subsequently fueled the development of Neo-Confucianism as a whole.

---

<sup>8</sup> Ogawa Kandō, ed. *Kangakusha denki oyobi chojutsu shūran* (Tokyo: Meicho Kankōkai, 1977), 380

<sup>9</sup> In this dissertation, I use the term, “scholarship” as an English equivalent of the Japanese term, “*gakumon*” and in the Tokugawa context, *gakumon* referred primarily to Sinology studies or Confucianism.

<sup>10</sup> Unoda Shōya, “Jusha,” in *Chishiki to gakumon o ninau hitobito*, ed. Yokota Fuyuhiko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007), 19.

<sup>11</sup> Kate Wildman Nakai, “The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40, no. 1 (1980): 157.

Shibata Jun argues that the rise of Neo-Confucianism was the result of the sporadic adoptions of Neo-Confucianism by individual minds at different degrees and depths.<sup>12</sup>

However, this perspective focusing on Neo-Confucianism as individual ethics is as problematic as the state ideology paradigm because the scholars supporting this idea are not successful in proving that the ethical values of Neo-Confucianism had broadly penetrated into Japanese mind and society.

Nakae Tōju (1608-1648) once lamented that the samurai in his hometown believed that scholarship was for cowards, thus he had to study only at night when nobody would see him studying.<sup>13</sup> This reveals that many samurai were not accustomed to pursuing Neo-Confucian scholarship in the early Tokugawa period. The men at the helm of the shogunate were not an exception. For instance, Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, was worshiped as Shinto-Buddhist godhead *daigongen* after his death, and his spirit tablet was placed at Tōshōgū, where combined Buddhist and Shinto rituals.

According to Kurozumi Makoto, Confucianism had an unprivileged position in Japan because Confucian rituals which significantly affected individuals and communities, such as the notion of Heaven and systems of ancestor worship, were not established in Japan.<sup>14</sup>

In this regard, it is hard to say that Neo-Confucianism had emerged as the mainstream mode of scholarship from the beginning of the Tokugawa period simply because of its

---

<sup>12</sup> Shibata Jun, *Shisōshi ni okeru kinsei* (Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1991), 183.

<sup>13</sup> Bitō Masahide, “Tōju sensei nenpu,” in *Nakae Tōju*, ed. Yamanoi Yū, et al., NST, vol. 29 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 286-87.

<sup>14</sup> Makoto Kurozumi, “Introduction to “the Nature of Early Tokugawa Confucianism,”” *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 340.

philosophical appeal. This raises the question of how an argument so logically vulnerable has remained largely unchallenged to this date. It is because scholars are familiar with the narrative portraying Neo-Confucianism in the East Asian world as having dominated almost every field of people's lives and minds.

Maruyama Masao suggested that Neo-Confucianism had served as the major epistemological system of the way of thinking for Japanese people from the early Tokugawa period.<sup>15</sup> He compared Tokugawa Japan to the Chinese Han dynasty which reunified China after the Chin dynasty and adopted Confucianism as the official state learning.

He assumed that the socio-political situation of early Tokugawa society resembled the counterpart of the Han and thus this circumstance led Tokugawa Japan to adopt Neo-Confucianism, the most dominant scholarship in the East Asian world at that time, as the major philosophical and political ideology just like the Han did.<sup>16</sup> Since Neo-Confucianism dominated the East Asian world in terms of both individual ethics and political ideology, it is not surprising that most scholars have approached related issues through a primarily philosophical lens, and studies on Neo-Confucianism in Japan are no exception. But while there is no question that Neo-Confucianism was the dominant intellectual paradigm—indeed, state ideology—in both Ming China and Chosŏn Korea, however, it is equally clear that this was not the case in Japan before the seventeenth century. Moreover, it took several

---

<sup>15</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*, 30.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

decades for Neo-Confucianism to attract a broad following in Japan, and did not have the status of “state ideology”—at least until the Kansei Reforms of 1787-1793.

What, then, would be an alternative paradigm to examine this issue? Or to rephrase: what did the rise of Neo-Confucianism mean for Japan if it did not occupy a position of intellectual dominance? Most scholars have discussed this issue from a philosophical perspective, but they have failed to prove that Tokugawa society was dominated by Neo-Confucian philosophy. This implies that it is necessary for us to examine Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism from perspectives other than a philosophical lens to answer the question.

In fact, the growth of Neo-Confucian philosophy during the early Tokugawa period does not necessarily mean that it was widespread. It is obvious that sophisticated philosophical discourses based on Neo-Confucianism had developed from the early Tokugawa period, and I am not rejecting the fact that the intellectual tradition of Tokugawa Japan had several brilliant Confucian philosophers who established their own philosophical systems through dialectic interactions with Neo-Confucian philosophy. Such towering figures as Yamazaki Ansai (1619-1682), Itō Jinsai (1627-1705), and Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) come immediately to mind. However, they were exceptional figures; many scholars who proclaimed their identity as Neo-Confucianist had only a shallow understanding of Neo-Confucian texts. That is to say, not all Neo-Confucianists in the early Tokugawa period were Neo-Confucian philosophers.

This signifies that far more insight is to be gained by viewing Neo-Confucianism in early modern Japan through a more utilitarian lens. I believe that the pursuit of Confucian scholarship in Tokugawa Japan was propelled, particularly in the seventeenth century, by

individual ambitions pertaining to social mobility, rather than by philosophical commitment or political demands.

One of the critical mistakes that previous scholars made, then, was presupposing that only in the Tokugawa period was the significance of Neo-Confucianism realized. While it is true that Neo-Confucianism rapidly became more significant, intellectually and institutionally, in that period, earlier Japanese society had already taken note of the utility of Neo-Confucianism. The use of Neo-Confucianism as a font for pragmatic knowledge perhaps represents a significant continuity in Japanese intellectual history. Anno Masaki argues that there were many Rinzai monks fluent in both spoken and written Chinese during the Kamakura period because they had actually studied in China to research Buddhist sutras and Neo-Confucian texts written in Chinese.<sup>17</sup> From the late 15<sup>th</sup> century the Ming dynasty and the Ashikaga shogunate strengthened the relationship for trade and diplomacy with tributary dimensions.<sup>18</sup>

This circumstance helped Rinzai Zen monks who wrote and spoke Chinese to assume the role of key players in both diplomatic and trade affairs for medieval Japanese rulers.<sup>19</sup>

Although Confucianism had not occupied the dominant position in Japan, Confucian scholarship had long served as a valuable source of cultural capital for Japanese intellectuals seeking to obtain socio-political influence, in spite of the fact that Japan lacked

---

<sup>17</sup> Anno Masaki, “Sengoku-ki Nihon no bōeki tantōsha: Zensō kara Iezusukaishi e,” *Kurosu rōdo: Hirosaki Daigaku kyōiku gakubu kenkyū kiyo* 2 (2000): 16.

<sup>18</sup> Mary Elizabeth Berry, “Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?,” in *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to C. 1830*, ed. Victor B Lieberman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 121.

<sup>19</sup> Murai Shōsuke, *Higashi Ajia ōkan: kanshi to gaikō* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1995), 24-7.

the tradition of a civil service examination system, which in other East Asian countries had served as a device to connect Confucian scholarship to the individual's ambition for political success.

Access to Confucian texts and scholarship had been largely limited to certain prestigious groups, particularly a few Kyoto noble families, on the one hand, and Rinzaï Zen Buddhist monks, on the other. However, during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, this privileged cartel was broken by the emergence of professional Neo-Confucianists who made their living by capitalizing on their knowledge of Confucian scholarship as full-time vocational Confucianists. That is to say, it was only in the early Tokugawa period that a distinct cadre of self-identified professional Neo-Confucianists arose; the phenomenon of “the rise of Neo-Confucianism” in this period was propelled by these scholars’ professional activities, not by a religious or philosophical preference for Neo-Confucian philosophy among either the political elite or the broader Japanese populace.

If we include in the category of Confucianist anybody who possessed the knowledge or culture involved with Confucianism, then this concept of “Confucianist” was not new to Japanese intellectual society. Confucian texts were introduced to Japan during the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> century, and the Hakase-ke, a group of minor noble houses who pursued Confucian scholarship based on Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period as their family calling. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century, another group, monks of the newly independent Rinzaï sect of Zen, turned their mastery of Chinese texts to advantage, using Neo-Confucian scholarship as an asset to earn political patronage.

However, it was not necessary for Hakase-ke to pursue Confucian scholarship as a profession because they belonged to a court nobility that had enjoyed hereditary cultural



and political privileges. On other hand, Rinzai monks offered their knowledge of Neo-Confucian scholarship and the classical Chinese corpus in service to the Japanese state as experts in diplomatic and legislative matters, but they always did so in the capacity of “Buddhists” with special skills, rather than as “Neo-Confucians.”

The professional Neo-Confucianists who emerged in the early Tokugawa period, by contrast, had both aspects of professionalism and a self-identity as a professed Neo-Confucianist which differentiated them from conventional intellectuals involved with Confucian scholarship.

The appearance of this cadre of professed and professional Neo-Confucians greatly changed the geography of the Japanese intellectual landscape. First of all, the professional Neo-Confucianists constructed a space for commoners to participate in intellectual and scholarly pursuits. As mentioned above, prior to the emergence of the professional Neo-Confucianists, access to Confucian scholarship had long been monopolized by privileged groups such as Hakase-ke and Rinzai monks. The social class system in Japan had been mainly dominated by inherited status but there also had been room for individual ability to open other doorways to elevate individuals’ social status—especially in the turbulent years of civil warfare, ca. 1467-1600. For some people, this ability was military service, while for others, it meant scholarly knowledge, especially in humanistic studies.

For instance, since the Kamakura period, Rinzai Zen Buddhism had served as the major intellectual partner for the shogunate. Martin Collcutt argues that Rinzai fascinated the leaders of the Kamakura shogunate, for they were interested in acquiring a rich

knowledge of Chinese culture and rituals as well religious activities.<sup>20</sup> Rinzai monks had acquired their knowledge of Chinese studies through the study of both the broader Chinese classical canon and Neo-Confucian texts, and the path to this scholarship had been under the control of Zen monasteries.

Japanese governments had had no formal diplomatic ties with China since the 10<sup>th</sup> century until Ashikaga Yoshimitsu (1358-1408), the 3<sup>rd</sup> shogun of the Muromachi shogunate entered into formal relations with China, but private trade between China and Japan was quite developed and many Chinese Chan monks visited Japan, while Japanese monks also traveled to China for study. As mentioned above, Rinzai monks were fluent in both spoken and written Chinese and this helped them serve as a center of cultural exchange between China and Japan.

This does not signify that Rinzai Zen never functioned as a religious tradition, but rather implies that its extensive intellectual assets also helped Rinzai institutions and clerics to obtain political patronage from the shogunate from the Kamakura period onward, and from regional powers in the Muromachi and Sengoku eras. The political power of Rinzai Zen *per se* was reduced following the Ōnin War (1467-77), which critically weakened shogunal authority. However, this did not erode the intellectual influence of Rinzai monasteries, because individual feudal lords who arose during the Sengoku Period also relied on Rinzai intellectual manpower to support their governance, since they still constituted the most reliable pool to satisfy this demand.<sup>21</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> Martin Collcutt, *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1981), 264.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 264.

In contrast, the private academies established by professional Neo-Confucianists in the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries most often accepted commoners as well as the members of higher social status. Students' tuition was the foundation of professional Neo-Confucianists' livelihood, and thus they welcomed commoners. With the development of vibrant commercial Japanese publishing industry from the early Tokugawa period, books became widely and cheaply available, and this urged the expansion of the reading population.<sup>22</sup>

The emergence of Neo-Confucian professionals after 1600 signified the opening of scholarship to the larger public, and the end of any elite monopoly on higher scholarship. Commoners could now choose to pursue scholarship as one way to enhance their social status. Of course, Japanese commoners were able to learn how to read and write at private primary schools such as *tenarai* that appeared around the country over the course of the Tokugawa period.<sup>23</sup> They did not need to attend the Confucian academies to acquire basic literacy—in fact, Confucian academies assume that their students entered with fairly advanced literacy in classical Chinese as well as Japanese. The opportunity for professional advancement that Confucianism afforded actually motivated more people to study it, contributing to the flourishing of Neo-Confucianism across Tokugawa society at large. Far from scholars and elites mirroring a broader intellectual trend already occurring in Tokugawa society, then, the opportunity to advance socially and professionally through

---

<sup>22</sup> Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 27-33.

<sup>23</sup> Brian Platt, *Burning and Building: Schooling and State Formation in Japan, 1750-1890* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004), 24

Neo-Confucian studies caused this trend to emerge in the first place, and contributed to changing the makeup of the scholarly elite.

This made it attractive for Tokugawa political leaders to hire Neo-Confucianists as intellectual assistants. In fact, the early Tokugawa shogunate continued the tradition of relying on Rinzai monks as their brain trust for Sinological knowledge largely because they were the most readily available providers of intellectual service, not because they sought spiritual guidance from the Rinzai sect. In terms of religion, the Tokugawa clan had a close relationship with both the Tendai and Pure Land schools of Buddhism. Ieyasu turned to the Tendai Buddhist monk Nankōbō Tenkai (1536? - 1643), not only as a political counselor, but also as his religious adviser. In addition, he hired Seishō Jōtai and Ishin Sūden (1569-1633), two hierarchs of Rinzai which was in a rivalry with the old school Buddhism including Tendai. This did not cause a major problem because Ieyasu mainly expected intellectual rather than religious service from Jōtai and Sūden. We should understand the motive of the shogunate's recruitment of Neo-Confucianists from this perspective as well.

The appearance of professional Neo-Confucianists gave the shogunate and broader political elite diversity in choosing intellectual manpower. The shogunate began to hire Confucianists because they were newly available, and because as full-time, exclusive Sinologists, they had a more complete command of Chinese classical knowledge, not because the shogunate somehow preferred Neo-Confucian philosophy. In other words, it was not the background of intellectuals that concerned the shogunate, as long as they were able to provide the intellectual services the shogunate required.

At the beginning of the Tokugawa period, Rinzai monks were a majority in the intellectual market;<sup>24</sup> indeed, in the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the number of professional, exclusive Neo-Confucianists likely did not exceed a dozen or so pioneers. Yet eventually these men and their students almost completely displaced Zen clerics as intellectual professionals in service to the state. Thus, the sudden proliferation of Neo-Confucianists during the early Tokugawa period should therefore be examined in the context of the practical merits of hiring Confucianists over Zen monks. Simply speaking, there must have been comparative merits in hiring Confucianists than Rinzai monks such as accessibility, skill quality, and cost.

Professional Neo-Confucianists also enabled the development of philosophical discourses on Confucianism. Since the Hakase-ke were committed to the transmission of orthodox theories of Han-Tang period Exegetical Studies, schools committed to semantic analysis of the Confucian classics, they did not expand their scholarly territory to the field of Confucian philosophy, much less the Cheng-Zhu school we now term ‘Neo-Confucianism.’ Indeed, as discussed above, Neo-Confucian knowledge was a significant source of Rinzai Zen Buddhism’s secular success, as scholars such as Anno and Murai have noted. Then, why have scholars contradictorily overlooked the position and significance of Neo-Confucianism prior to the Tokugawa period in spite of its significant role? It was

---

<sup>24</sup> In this project, I demonstrate the value of introducing the concept of competition in an intellectual market. This concept can serve as a powerful correction to the image of a lofty, distant figure frequently conjured by the term “intellectual.” The next step then is to presume the existence of a system enabling intellectuals to exchange these immaterial commodities with sources guaranteeing social influence. I propose that this system be labeled an intellectual market. Medieval and early modern Japan also clearly had such a market system, within which Rinzai Zen monks had played the role of leading supplier since the Kamakura Period.

because Rinzaï Zen monks adopted Neo-Confucian scholarship as a literary instrument and did not emphasize the philosophical aspects of Neo-Confucianism. In other words, they were generic Sinologists rather than anything we can identify as doctrinal Neo-Confucianist.

Meanwhile, the appearance of the professional Confucianists helped Confucianism to rise as a stand-alone school independent of the shadow of both the noble Hakase-ke scholars and Zen monks, and this contributed to the development of Neo-Confucian philosophy. With this development of Confucian scholarship since the early Tokugawa period, Japan was able to develop diverse philosophical discourses and finally rejoin the intellectual arena of the East Asian world.

Since access to Confucian texts and scholarship had been limited almost exclusively to the Hakase-ke and Rinzaï Zen monks until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, it was quite difficult for commoners or even samurai outside Zen monasteries or the *hakase* families to acquire Confucian knowledge. Then, how did professional Confucianists free their knowledge from both Rinzaï Zen and the Hakase-ke? This was actually made possible by some Neo-Confucian converts from Rinzaï Zen Buddhism. Some former Zen monks who had studied Neo-Confucian texts as part of their monastic training converted to be secular scholars, and they established private academies which provided commoners with the opportunity to learn Confucian scholarship.

In this regard, the processes and the motives leading to the emergence of a large cadre of professional Neo-Confucianists are critical factors for explaining the characteristic features of Neo-Confucian scholarship in the Tokugawa period. In order to understand these processes, I examine the lives, careers, thought, and socio-political influence of two

of the most important early Neo-Confucian converts from Rinzai Zen during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) and Hayashi Razan (1583-1657).

Sometime around 1591 Seika, a former Rinzai monk at Shōkokuji, one of the largest Rinzai monasteries in Kyoto, shifted his professional commitment from Zen to Neo-Confucianism, and established a private academy in Kyōto to train Confucian scholars. Most of the early modern private Confucian academies which helped samurai and commoners to join the world of scholarship descended from Seika's institute. In addition, Razan, a former novice at another major Kyoto Rinzai monastery, Kenninji, left the temple to become a Neo-Confucianist and later bridged the gap between Neo-Confucianists and the central politics of Tokugawa Japan. He was the first professional Confucianist hired by the Tokugawa shogunate.

Seika's and Razan's conversions from Zen to Neo-Confucianism were initially separate and individual events, each prompted by personal circumstances and choices. But these two converts went on to spark the appearance of other exclusive Neo-Confucians, and eventually contribute to the birth of the new intellectual mainstream of the Tokugawa period, namely a Neo-Confucianism independent of Buddhism. In this regard, pursuing the motivations of these early Neo-Confucian converts in choosing this course of action over continuing with Rinzai Zen Buddhism constitutes the first step towards understanding the process of what Kate Nakai has called the "naturalization of Neo-Confucianism" in Japan.

Previous studies have approached the conversions of Seika and Razan to Neo-Confucianism through the lens of a philosophical shift, charting a transition in thought from the mode of Rinzai Zen to that of Neo-Confucianism. Kanaya Osamu argues that Fujiwara Seika abandoned Zen Buddhism after he acquired philosophical insight from the Confucian

Classics.<sup>25</sup> Ōta Seikyū argues that the combination of Seika's preliminary knowledge of Neo-Confucianism, acquired in the course of his Buddhist training, and his own philosophical enlightenment emerged collectively from his speculative engagement with the Neo-Confucian texts.<sup>26</sup> Takahashi Fumihiro argues that Seika separated Neo-Confucianism from Zen Buddhism because he discovered a fundamental philosophical difference between the two of them.<sup>27</sup>

These conventional approaches assert that Seika and Razan converted because, while studying the Confucian Classics as part of their training for the Zen monkhood, they obtained insight into Neo-Confucian philosophy and became aware of the 'inner contradictions' of Buddhist logic. No real explanation is offered as to why such enlightenment could not have occurred in earlier centuries. As Maruyama Masao argued, Tokugawa Japan welcomed Neo-Confucianism as its major intellectual mode because the system of thought was well suited to the new social order of Tokugawa society, and this atmosphere directly contributed to the increase in the number of Neo-Confucian adherents and the degree of the philosophy's influence.

However, this is a hasty conclusion which approaches circular logic (Neo-Confucianism was successful in Tokugawa society because it suited Tokugawa society; Tokugawa society became Confucianized due to the efforts of Neo-Confucian intellectuals

---

<sup>25</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, eds., *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, NST, vol. 28 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 449.

<sup>26</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika* (Tokyo: Kōbunkan, 1985), 54.

<sup>27</sup> Takahashi Fumihiro, "Jukyō to Bukkyō no ronsō," in *Nihon shisō ronsōshi*, ed. Imai Jun and Ozawa Tomio (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1996), 149.



and the support of the political establishment), and ignores socio-intellectual factors surrounding the individual lives and circumstances of these converts. It goes without saying that Seika and Razan were intellectuals deeply committed to Neo-Confucian philosophy, but it does not necessarily follow that all of their activities and decisions were therefore propelled by wholly philosophical motivations. Certainly, some primary sources, i.e., texts they themselves composed, indicate that their conversion to Neo-Confucianism was rooted to some extent in anti-Buddhist sentiment, but it is essential to read between the lines of these sources.

As Quentin Skinner suggests, authors' intentions in writings can be explained by reconstructing the conventions and situations surrounding a text.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, a close examination of the sources reveals that these converts' philosophical writings contain multiple, contradictory accounts which conflict with their explicit, formal stance that their conversions were driven by anti-Buddhist sentiment. On this issue, Richard Bowring argues the following.

Contrary to what Razan would have us believe, Seika never went so far as to repudiate his Zen Buddhist background, and it is doubtful whether he made quite such a show of Neo-Confucianism as Razan likes to suggest.<sup>29</sup>

Lewis Rambo argues that research on religious conversion should examine holistically the entire matrix of the convert's philosophy, human relations, and social

---

<sup>28</sup> Quentin Skinner, "A Reply to My Critics," in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 267, 278.

<sup>29</sup> Richard John Bowring, "Fujiwara Seika and the Great Learning," *Monumenta Nipponica* 61, no. 4 (2006): 444.

context.<sup>30</sup> From this perspective, then, even if we are to accept the accounts of the converts, we can assume that certain additional motivations other than purely philosophical concerns propelled their shift from Zen to Neo-Confucianism.

In this regard, I shall argue that the Neo-Confucian conversions of Seika and Razan were not the result of profound philosophical change from Rinzaï Zen to Neo-Confucianism, but rather were propelled by internal struggles within Rinzaï Zen in the intellectual market. In other words, these converts abandoned the Buddhist position to strategically locate themselves as more ‘professional’ Neo-Confucian scholars instead of Zen monks who practiced the Neo-Confucian scholarship as a subculture. Seika and Razan professed Neo-Confucianism but their intent of pursuing Neo-Confucian scholarship lay on the broader mastery of Chinese studies rather than the particulars of their personal belief systems and this gave them market appeal. It was a power positioning, for their competition in the intellectual market, and this choice successfully served their purposes.

Albert Camus once defined an intellectual as the nation’s conscience and the defender of justice,<sup>31</sup> while Karl Mannheim saw the intellectual as a provider of moral criteria to society.<sup>32</sup> Facing such idealized associations, it is hardly surprising that issues concerning intellectuals tend to be approached almost exclusively through the lens of philosophy or metaphysics, particularly when systems of thought are under discussion. Such a lens,

---

<sup>30</sup> Lewis R. Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 5.

<sup>31</sup> Albert Camus, “Return to Tipasa,” in *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, ed. Philip Thody (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 167-68.

<sup>32</sup> Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., 1936), xlv.

however, obscures the oft-forgotten fact that intellectuals are also a group of ordinary people, who need to make a living with their skills before they can dedicate themselves to the pursuit of lofty endeavors. In light of this reality, we can approach intellectuals in terms of their social role, redefining them as individuals who exert social influence through their intellectual capacities, whether in the fields of culture, knowledge, scholarship, philosophy, or information.

Seika was part of this cadre of elite monks expected to serve political leaders. Razan, who lived somewhat later and was inspired by Seika's ideas, was a novice who had studied Chinese literature and philosophy in a monastery. Had they wanted to achieve secular success, maintaining their monastery positions would appear to have been a far more certain course to follow, given that political leaders had relied exclusively on Rinzai clerics when recruiting Sinological specialists. This appears to lend credence to the view that Seika and Razan sacrificed their positions to pursue Neo-Confucian philosophy as a matter of faith, not out of practical concerns. In fact, however, Seika and Razan both offered essentially the same services as had Zen monks. The difference may have been a matter of strategic planning or even self-marketing. I also argue that these utilitarian motives behind the emergence of early professional Confucianists significantly affected the fate of later Japanese Neo-Confucianism itself.

The actual motives of Seika's and Razan's conversions from Zen to Neo-Confucianism reveal that these conversions were propelled by utilitarian reasons rather than philosophical ones. They also testify that their scholarly attitude towards Neo-Confucian scholarship was not that different from the counterpart of Zen monks who practically capitalized the merit of Neo-Confucian scholarship prior to the Tokugawa period. In this

sense, the contribution of Seika's and Razan's conversions to the history of Neo-Confucianism in Japan should be examined through a different lens from the conventional perspective focusing on philosophical paradigms. I argue that this change in turn stimulated the ambitions of commoners and marginalized samurai (*rōnin*) for social mobility, since Neo-Confucian knowledge offered them opportunities to be recruited by the ruling elite. Unsurprisingly, this atmosphere encouraged people to pursue Neo-Confucian studies as a path to advancement.

## Chapter 1: A Neo-Confucian Convert from Zen Buddhism

### Debate at Nijō Castle

One day in the autumn of 1600, a 39-year-old scholar visited Nijō Castle in response to an invitation from Tokugawa Ieyasu (1543-1616) the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate.<sup>1</sup> His name was Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619). He used to be a monk of Shōkokuji, the second-ranked temple of the Rinzai sect in Kyoto Gozan (Five Mountains) but later left the temple to be an independent scholar.<sup>2</sup> While visiting the castle, Seika had a chance to meet his old Buddhist colleagues, but this reunion ended up a heated discussion instead of a friendly meeting. Hayashi Razan (1583-1657) depicted this reunion in the memorial tribute of Seika as follows.

In the ninth month in the autumn, the lord [Ieyasu] entered Kyoto. The master [Seika] had an audience with the lord, who asked the master to give a lecture. There were present the monks [Seishō] Jōtai (1548-1608)<sup>3</sup> and [Genpo] Reisan (? - ?), with whom the master was personally acquainted. They were proud of their scholarship. Originally they had been *literati* of Sire Hideyoshi, after whose demise they had

---

<sup>1</sup> This castle, built in 1569 by Oda Nobunaga for for the last Ashikaga shogun, was torn down after construction on the current Nijō Castle in was completed in 1603.

<sup>2</sup> The Gozan (“Five Mountains”) of late sixteenth-century Kyoto comprised five leading temples of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism. In 1386, four years after the founding of Shōkokuji as the tutelary temple of the Ashikaga shogunal house, Nanzenji, which had theretofore been the highest ranking of the Gozan, was elevated to a rank above the Gozan. Shōkokuji was then the highest ranking of the reconstituted Gozan, though still second to Nanzenji.

<sup>3</sup> There are multiple ways to pronounce his name. Seishō can be read as Saisho and Jōtai can be Shōtai.

served the lord. Jōtai criticized the master, “There exist verity and worldliness in the world. You abandoned the monkhood and verity for worldliness. I cannot help pitying you for this, and other colleagues regret what you did as well.” The master replied, “Monks assert that there exist verity and worldliness, but all human relationships we can see are verity. I have never heard the people regard a superior person as a worldly one. I am afraid that it is you monks who are worldly. How can sages dispose of the human world?” Jōtai was not comfortable with this argument.<sup>4</sup>

The above conversation implies that Seika had ceased following Buddhist teachings after he left the temple and began to criticize the Buddhist worldview from the stance of Confucianism. From this, we can see a sort of a religious conversion case between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Of course, it is necessary for us to first verify if Confucianism can be regarded as a religion or not before we launch the discussion. Seen from the conventional perspective of western religion, it is subtle to assert that Confucianism is certainly a religion because it neither has a concept of God like Western religions nor talk about the afterlife. However, we can define it as a religion because it has the master Confucius as the subject of worship and ethical codes which affects people’s mind and behavior,<sup>5</sup> and this allows us to approach the conflict of Seika and Zen monks as a religious conversion issue.

At a glance, this event merely seems like an individual conflict of philosophical perspective, but I would like to deal this event as one of the most significant scenes in the

---

<sup>4</sup> Hayashi Razan, “Seika sensei gyōjō,” in *Fujiwara Seika shū*, ed. Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978), 8.

<sup>5</sup> Rodney Leon Taylor, *The Religious Dimensions of Confucianism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 9-17.

history of Confucianism in Japan. Although Ōkuwa Hitoshi argues that there is some possibility that this anecdote is fabricated by Razan,<sup>6</sup> the appearance of this kind of story per se, if it was fabricated or not, still shows that some significant change happened to the relationship of Confucianism and Buddhism in Japan.

Some people may raise a question why this conflict is important to the history of Neo-Confucianism in Japan, because the conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism was neither rare nor surprising in general. Ever since Han Yu (768-824), the famous Tang-dynasty Confucian scholar, expressed a firm anti-Buddhist position, Confucianism had been widely regarded as the nemesis of Buddhism in the East Asian world.<sup>7</sup> The conflict between Buddhism and Confucianism became bitter after the rise of Neo-Confucianism, which had a more sophisticated philosophical system than classical Confucianism, Zhu Xi (1130-1200), who formulated what came to be recognized as Neo-Confucian orthodoxy, criticized Buddhism with the following statement.

The “enlightenment” of Chan [J. *Zen*] Buddhism refers to finding the principle of Heaven by eliminating the way of thinking in the human mind. However, this is a wrong idea because right thinking in the human mind is the principle of Heaven itself and the operation of the human mind is the way to express the principle of Heaven.<sup>8</sup>

Zen Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism shared similar philosophical concepts. For instance, *Ju-jing-qiong-li* (cultivate yourself in reverence and theoretical examination) one

---

<sup>6</sup> Ōkuwa Hitoshi, *Nihon kinsei no shisō to Bukkyō* (Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1989), 169-75.

<sup>7</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 37.

<sup>8</sup> Zhu Xi, *Zhu Xi ji*, vol. 5, pt.59 (Chengdu: Sichuan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1996), 3045.

of the most significant methodologies of Neo-Confucianism to learn the substantial meaning of *li* (principle), is quite similar to the concept of Zen meditation as a means to attain enlightenment. Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism also shared a common concept of the heavenly principle as the external standard of the truth.

Putting aside popular synthetic movements, intellectuals tended to regard the two systems of thought as oppositional, and perhaps inherently so because there was a conceptual difference concerning the value of human mind between two traditions. Zhu Xi trusted the human mind as an operator of the principle of Heaven while Buddhism considered it the obstacle to finding truth. Chǒng Tojǒn (1342-98), a Korean Neo-Confucian, scholar argued that Neo-Confucianism had more scientific logic in explanation of the life of human being criticized the “unscientific” attitude of Buddhism toward the explanation of the life of human beings. He stated that the Buddhist idea of the life of human beings is a plague because it believes that ethical causes and effects determine the physical life of the human being while Confucianism explains the human world with “scientific” concepts of *li*, *qi* (material force), and five elements.<sup>9</sup>

I will not judge whether Neo-Confucianism is more scientific than Buddhism here, but would like to suggest that these two arguments show that their differing perspectives on the human world and relationships was the sharpest point of the collision of Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Chung Chai-sik suggests that the human relationship in society became the standard criterion for the Neo-Confucian scholars to criticize Buddhism because they

---

<sup>9</sup> Han Yǒng'u, *Wangjo ūi sǒlkyeja Chǒng Tojǒn* (Seoul: Chisik Sanǒpsa, 1999), 131.



thought that the Buddhists focused on the problems after death and individual salvation while ignoring people's social responsibilities to family and state.<sup>10</sup>

In this regard, the conflict between Seika and Jōtai may seem a typical debate on the philosophical difference of Confucianism and Buddhism, similar to other cases in China or Korea. However, it had a special meaning to the history of Confucianism in Japan because the debate between Seika and Jōtai likely represented the first case of a direct philosophical conflict between Zen Buddhism and Confucianism in Japan.

Seika was not the first Japanese scholar involved with Confucian scholarship. Japanese intellectual society first became familiar with Confucian texts around the 4th or 5th century. According to *Kojiki*, Wani (? - ?) a scholar from Paekche, one of the ancient kingdoms on the Korean peninsula, brought *Analects* and the *Thousand Character Classic* to Japan during the reign of the Emperor Ōjin (370? - 410?)<sup>11</sup>, and the *Nihon Shoki* says that he taught Chinese scholarship to become the prince Ujinowakiiratsuko (? - 312).<sup>12</sup> Since there is serious question about the very existence of both Wani and Emperor Ōjin, we cannot accept these accounts at face value, but there are a few examples of how Confucian concepts were spread in Japanese politics in the following centuries.

For instance, Japan through the so-called Taika Reforms already had official positions titled after the term of Confucian virtues: virtue, righteousness, ritual propriety,

---

<sup>10</sup> Chung Chai-sik, "Chōng Tojōn: "Architect of Yi Dynasty Government and Ideology," in *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, ed. Wm. Theodore de Bary and Jahyun Kim Haboush (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 74-5.

<sup>11</sup> Ogiwara Asao and Kōnosu Hayao, comp., *Kojiki*, NKBT, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1983), 158.

<sup>12</sup> Sakamoto Tarō, comp., *Nihon shoki*, NKBT, vol. 67 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 372.

and wisdom in the 7<sup>th</sup> century. In addition, the Court Academy (Daigakuryō) taught the Confucian classics and the Confucian classics in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. This implies that Japanese politics had already adopted some Confucian elements into its system at least by the beginning of the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>13</sup>

Neo-Confucian scholarship was also introduced to Japan during the late Kamakura period. According to Ashikaga Enjutsu, Shunjō (1166-1227), a Zen monk who had studied in China brought several copies of Neo-Confucian texts while he imported sutras and other Chinese literature, and this was the beginning of Neo-Confucian scholarship in Japan.<sup>14</sup>

From these accounts we can see that the Japanese intellectual society became acquainted with Confucianism much earlier than the time when Seika lived. Why then we could not witness the events concerning philosophical conflicts between Confucianism and Buddhism prior to the case of Seika and Jōtai? Vice-versa, why was the first conflict shown in the conversation between Seika and Jōtai? Then, what did Seika's conversion consequently mean to Confucianism in Japan? Why then there had not been philosophical conflicts between Confucianism and Buddhism in spite of the long history of Confucianism in Japan?

### **Position of Confucianism in Pre-Modern Japan**

The answer to above questions is simple. Confucianism of pre-modern Japan had not been in a position to launch the philosophical debates against Buddhism. Although

---

<sup>13</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary et al., eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times Through the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 48.

<sup>14</sup> Ashikaga Enjutsu, *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no Jukyō* (Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1932), 31.

Japanese politics adopted a few Confucian elements into its system but this does not signify that Confucianism or its philosophical aspects earned an influential position in Japanese society.

In terms of metaphysical or religious authority, Japan was a country that followed Buddhism. The Prince Shōtoku declared that Japan was a country that followed and protected Buddhism. *Jūshichijō kenpō* (the Seventeen-article Constitution), attributed to the Prince, demands Japanese to sincerely revere the three treasures: the Buddha, his teaching, and the ordained community.<sup>15</sup> Due to this historical background, Japanese politics had maintained a close relationship with Buddhism. Buddhism had provided political authorities with religious and ideological support and received patronage from authorities as reward for their services.

It is not hard to find examples displaying the relationship between Buddhism and Japanese politics. Brian Ruppert, for example, describes how the Japanese political tradition appropriated the Buddhist authority for its own sake. For instance, Japanese emperors claimed they were patrons of Buddhism, and hosted magnificent ceremonies to distribute Buddhist relics to local lords. Such events constituted political strategies that led the people to believe that imperial authority was supported by the religious power of the Buddha.<sup>16</sup> In other words, the Japanese imperial court utilized *shari*, the Buddha's relics, in order to reinforce the political power of Japanese emperors during the medieval period.

---

<sup>15</sup> Michael Como, *Shōtoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 28.

<sup>16</sup> Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000), 75.

This was called *ōbō-buppō* (the royal law and the Buddhist law) or the mutual dependence between Buddhism and the state, and it was an important term to conceptualize the relationship between government and Buddhism.<sup>17</sup>

This relationship initially began with Buddhism and the imperial court, but the shogunate during later periods also continued this tradition as well. In 1283, the Kamakura shogunate designated Engakuji, one of the great Rinzai Zen temples in Kamakura, as the official place of prayers for the shogun.<sup>18</sup> During the Muromachi period Ashikaga Yorimichi (1358-1408), the 3<sup>rd</sup> shogun, established Shōkokuji in Kyoto and designated it as the second-ranked temple of the Kyoto Gozan (Five Mountains), the monastery system of the Rinzai branch of Zen. The major function of this temple was to conduct invocations and prayers for the memory of the deceased or the intentions of the living, and to make appropriate incantations during wartime, drought, or natural disasters. For example, the shogunate requested Shōkokuji monks to perform exorcisms when strange things happened in Kyoto<sup>19</sup>, and to offer prayers to celebrate the shogun's birthday.

In this circumstance, Buddhist temples and monks were increasingly influential in politics and others like Confucian scholars rarely had opportunities for political participation. Then, what was the meaning of adopting Confucianism to pre-modern Japan, where Buddhism was well established as the dominant philosophical system?

---

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>18</sup> SS pt. 905, vol. 5, 280, accessed June 11, 2011, DNSSD (020100168842)

<sup>19</sup> DNS, pt 19, vol. 7, 422, accessed March 30, 2012, DNSSD (020100053803)

Confucianism has a strong image of metaphysical philosophy. However, it was also a full package of the Chinese socio-political system including, philosophy, ethics, literature, history, rituals, culture and laws. Hence, East Asian countries around China tended to import Confucian scholarship for building their own social and political system.

For instance, Paekche, the Korean kingdom that appears to have first transmitted Confucian (and Buddhist) texts to Japan worshiped Buddhism as a national religion. They transmitted Confucian learning to Japan not because they wanted to evangelize Confucianism but because they intended to portray themselves as culturally advanced to strengthen relations with Japan. Other kingdoms in the Korean peninsula took advantage of Confucianism in a similar way. Silla, another kingdom in Korea contemporaneous with Paekche, had declared that its territory and people would be protected by the religious power of Buddhism, yet the Silla government dispatched several officials to Tang-China to learn Confucian scholarship to improve their political abilities. These examples reveal that Confucianism and its scholarship in those countries had served as a vehicle carrying an advanced system of Chinese civilization rather than as an ideology. Adopting Confucianism did not always mean the worship of Confucian values.

Ogyū Sorai once argued that the Confucian way refers to the laws or institutions established by the sage kings of the antiquity rather than an ethical philosophy.<sup>20</sup> Confucian fundamentalists may have criticized Sorai's perspective as being Legalist, but I believe that Sorai understood the other characteristics of Confucianism besides philosophy quite well.

---

<sup>20</sup> Hongō Takamori and Fukaya Katsumi, *Kinsei shisō-ron* (Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1981).14.

Confucian philosophy had never worked as the state orthodoxy in Japan, but Japan had been familiar with Confucian concepts as information. A similar thing occurred when Neo-Confucian scholarship arrived at Japan. As mentioned above, Zen monks imported Neo-Confucian texts to Japan. According to Kawase Kazuma, there were 7 titles of Confucian classics with Neo-Confucian commentaries among the 277 manuscripts comprising the Kyoto Gozan bibliography around the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>21</sup> At a glance, the number of the Confucian titles seems small in comparison to the total number of volumes in the bibliography, but the monks were able to grasp the initiative of Neo-Confucian studies with even this limited collection. These copies of Confucian texts had been reprinted in order to be consistently read, and Neo-Confucian studies developed as part of the scholarly activities performed at Zen monasteries.<sup>22</sup>

Francisco Xavier (1506-1552), a Christian missionary who visited in Japan during the 16<sup>th</sup> century mentioned the number of student monks who had studied Chinese literature in Buddhist monasteries. According to him, over 3,500 monks were studying at the major monasteries in the Kyoto area during the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>23</sup> The specific number that Xavier mentioned may be not accurate because Xavier seemed to have learned this from rumors, and it is not certain how many people among these student monks actually accessed Neo-Confucian texts. According to Collcutt, around 10,000 monks had been attached to the 6

---

<sup>21</sup> Kawase Kazuma, *Gozan-ban no kenkyū*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Tokyo: Nihon Koshoseki Shōkyōkai, 1970), 130-32.

<sup>22</sup> Boot, “The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan,” 61.

<sup>23</sup> Henry James Coleridge, ed. *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier* (London: Burns and Oates, 1912), 257.

Kyoto Gozan monasteries during the late 14<sup>th</sup> and the 15<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>24</sup> but the monastic population had rapidly been declined after the Ōnin War (1467-1477).<sup>25</sup> In addition, the research activities on Chinese literature including Neo-Confucian texts were allowed only to the monks in the western rank (*seihan*).<sup>26</sup> Therefore, the actual number of student monks, therefore, might be smaller than Xavier's count, however we can see that there was at least a system to reproduce intellectuals familiar with Neo-Confucian knowledge prior to Seika's period.

However, the coexistence of Neo-Confucianism and Zen Buddhism under the same roof seems awkward because Confucianism had a history of conflicting with Zen Buddhism over philosophical matters. In light of this state of affairs, why, then, did Rinza monks take up Neo-Confucianism as an intellectual asset?

It is said that Zen monks studied Neo-Confucian texts not for their philosophical aspects, but rather to glean advanced knowledge of Chinese studies. Luis Frois (1532-1597), a Portuguese missionary who authored one of the earliest Western-language books on Japanese history, depicted the studies of Zen monks as follows:

Most students of Japan are Buddhist monks or novices. They spend most of their time and effort obtaining the knowledge how to read and write Chinese characters,

---

<sup>24</sup> Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 224.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>26</sup> There were two ranks: the western rank and the eastern rank in the Kyoto Gozan monastery. The western rank was responsible for meditation, Zen rituals, and study of texts while the eastern rank was involved with administrative affairs such as accounting. See Collcutt, 169, 238.

because Chinese has a myriad number of characters and even has several meanings in a single letter.<sup>27</sup>

This implies that Japanese Zen monks accessed Chinese literature, including Neo-Confucian texts, primarily in order to acquire linguistic competency in Chinese studies. During the medieval period, Buddhist monasteries played a role as an education institute as well as a religious center,<sup>28</sup> and Zen monks studied Neo-Confucian scholarship not because Neo-Confucianism mattered to them but because it was the most available, accessible, and influential scholarship in China. In other words, Neo-Confucian literature was an important source as well for Japanese Zen monks to catch up with advanced intellectual trend in the Chinese continent. From this perspective, then, Engelbert Kaempfer (1651-1716), a German physician who worked in Nagasaki, 1690-92, made an apt analogy when he compared the study of Confucianism before the Tokugawa period to that of the Greco-Roman philosophical texts in the monasteries of Europe.<sup>29</sup>

Zen monks utilized this knowledge of Chinese studies to reinforce their relationship with political authorities. Collcutt argues that Zen monks fascinated the elites of the Kamakura shogunate, for they were interested in the rich knowledge of Chinese culture and rituals as well as religious activities.<sup>30</sup> Japanese governments had had no formal diplomatic ties with China since the 10<sup>th</sup> century, after the Muromachi shogunate established a

---

<sup>27</sup> Luis Frois, *Nihonshi*, trans. Matsuda Kiichi and Kawasaki Momota (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1977), 7-8.

<sup>28</sup> Hoashi Banri, *Tōsenfuron* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1941), 68.

<sup>29</sup> Beatrice Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006), 50.

<sup>30</sup> Collcutt, 264.



tributary relationship with China in 1404.<sup>31</sup> As Japanese government exchanged more diplomatic documents with China, it needed more composers who could read and write righteous and elegant Chinese according to diplomatic protocol. Zen monks with the knowledge of Neo-Confucian scholarship became the major manpower supplier responding to the political demand for intellectual assistance. Anno Masaki also argues that many Rinzai Zen monks studied in China and became fluent in Chinese during the in Japan during the Kamakura period.<sup>32</sup> In this circumstance, Rinzai Zen monks who wrote and spoke Chinese arose as important players of both diplomatic and trade affairs for the Japanese government.<sup>33</sup>

Rinzai Zen monks played a role as experts in diplomatic and legislative affairs with their knowledge of Neo-Confucian scholarship, but they did so as Buddhists, rather than as Neo-Confucianists. That is to say, there was virtually no concept of a Neo-Confucian philosopher in Japan even though there were scholars holding Neo-Confucian knowledge. Besides Zen monks, there were other people involved with Confucian scholarship in Japan. The Hakase-ke, a group of minor noble houses, pursued Confucian scholarship based on Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period as their family calling. The Kiyowara clan that began as Myōgyōke, “the family explaining the classics in the court” had been actively involved with the Confucian studies until the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>31</sup> Berry, “Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?,” 121.

<sup>32</sup> Anno Masaki, “Sengoku-ki Nihon no bōeki tantōsha,” 16.

<sup>33</sup> Murai Shōsuke, *Higashi Ajia ōkan*, 24-7.

<sup>34</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann, eds., *Sources of Japanese Tradition: 1600 to 2000* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 29.

However, they were more decipherers of the text meaning of the Confucian classics than philosophers. They did not have strong philosophical identity as Confucianists, and they shared the foundation of political influence in Kyoto with Buddhists as well. In China and Korea, the philosophical debates between Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism became intense when they had political tensions. In Japan, Buddhism had dominated Japanese politics and Confucianism (including Neo-Confucianism) never occupied a position to fight against Buddhist influence.

This circumstance disturbed Confucianism to develop and spread its philosophical side and forced Confucian scholarship to stay in the shadow of Buddhism. The Buddhist influence would not allow a philosophical confrontation between Zen and Neo-Confucianism.

### **Seika as the Founding Father of Neo-Confucianism in Japan**

The scene of Seika's debate with Jōtai and Reisan at Nijō Castle indicates that the situation for Confucianism in Japan had changed. Unlike other scholars involved with Confucian scholarship, Seika belonged to neither Zen Buddhism nor Hakase-ke. While few scholars involved with Confucian scholarship had raised the question of the philosophical conflict between Confucianism and Buddhism, Seika as a Confucianist seemed to directly collide with Zen monks upon the issue of the difference of the worldview. This implies that a new-type scholar involved with Confucianism emerged around the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, and we see the first appearance of this kind of scholar in Seika.

Seika was born in Harima Province in 1561 to a noble family, the “Reizei” house of the Fujiwara that specialized in court poetry.<sup>35</sup> Fujiwara no Teika (1162-1241), one of the most prominent poets was his ancestor. Although his family hailed from a less influential branch of the clan, the name value of Reizei and the descent from Fujiwara no Teika both served as considerable assets for Seika’s career. Seika entered the temple Keiunji and there studied Buddhism and Chinese literature. His affiliation with the Rinzai Zen Buddhism appears to have been influenced by his family, which had already sent two of Seika’s uncles to monasteries in Kyoto. Seika encountered Neo-Confucian works in the temple, since Rinzai Zen monasteries were the major educational institute for the study of Neo-Confucianism at the time. As Seika spent his youth in the Sengoku Period, his family could not avoid the turmoil of military conflict.

When he was 19, his father and elder brother were killed in a battle against a local warlord, Bessho Nagaharu (1558-1580), and Seika fled to Kyoto with the rest of his family members. He was supposed to succeed in the position of the household of his family, but he asked his younger brother to do so before becoming a monk at Shōkokuji Temple, the second major monastery of the Five Mountains complex, through the sponsorship of his uncle Jusen (? - ?), abbot of one of the Shōkokuji subsidiary temples. In the Shōkokuji hierarchy, Seika was successfully promoted to *shuso* (the leader of monks practicing asceticism), the head monk of the western rank, an elite posting.

---

<sup>35</sup> Seika is his studio name after he became a Confucian. In fact, had had other names before he chose the name Seika; his original given name was Susumu, and the Buddhist name was Sōshun. In some documents, Fujiwara Seika appears under his Buddhist name.

However, when he was thirty years old he left the temple after a conflict with Jusen, the nature of which remains unclear. After leaving the temple, Seika began a career as an independent scholar, traveling to lecture on Confucian literature before several political figures. Having previously worked for the Toyotomi clan handling diplomatic documents for China while Hideyoshi prepared for the invasion of Korea, Seika's experience was known, and he was occasionally invited to Edo by Tokugawa Ieyasu to offer intellectual services. After his plan to enter Ming China by boat resulted in failure, he spent some time in Kyushu, and came to Fushimi to carry out academic work under the patronage of Akamatsu Hiromichi (1562-1600), the daimyo of Harima. While at Fushimi, he associated with Kang Hang (1567-1618), a Korean Neo-Confucianist forced to stay there as a prisoner-of-war during Hideyoshi's invasion.

It is unclear when he decided to change his identity from that of Zen monk to that of Neo-Confucianist. It seems that his career leaned more towards Neo-Confucianism once he left the temple in 1591. The reason for his conversion is similarly unclear, but the majority of scholars believe that Fujiwara Seika converted because while studying Confucian writings in the temple he discovered the superiority of Neo-Confucian philosophy over Buddhist philosophy. Later, Seika returned to Kyoto, and founded a school to train students in Neo-Confucianism, which resulted in his reputation as a great Neo-Confucian scholar. It is said that Tokugawa Ieyasu, the founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, had requested that he serve as a political advisor, but that Seika turned down his offer and instead remained a Neo-Confucian educator. In his stead, Seika recommended Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), and the Hayashi family subsequently served the Tokugawa shogunate as official *literati* for generations.

Considering this life of Seika, he is believed as the first scholar who liberated Neo-Confucian scholarship from the Buddhist influence. Without question, the typical narrative of the history of Japanese Neo-Confucianism in Japan always begins with his name. *Sentetsu sōdan*, a collection of biographies of prominent Confucian scholars published in the late Tokugawa Period, describes Seika as follows:

Seika converted from Zen Buddhism to Confucianism. His time was the Warring States era, when everyone was seeking weapons and rejecting study, but Seika alone inquired into, and learned, the Confucian way, and finally became the founding father of the scholarship in Japan.<sup>36</sup>

*Kangakusha denki shūsei* another collection of the biographies of early-modern Japanese scholars contributed to Chinese studies also depicts Seika in almost same way.<sup>37</sup> These two biographies label Seika as the founding father of ‘the scholarship.’ They did not articulate what type of scholarship, but we can easily assume that it refers to Neo-Confucianism since Seika learned Neo-Confucian scholarship when he was in the Zen monastery.

Seika was not the first person to introduce Neo-Confucianism to Japan. Yet Neo-Confucianism had first arrived in Japan during the late Kamakura Period, some three hundred years prior to Seika’s time. Why, then, is it Seika who is honored as the trailblazer of Japanese Neo-Confucianism? The answer lies in the phrase, “*he alone* inquired into, and learned, the Confucian way,” which implies that Seika was the first Japanese intellectual

---

<sup>36</sup> Hara Nensai, *Sentetsu sōdan*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Yūhōdō Shoten, 1920), 16.

<sup>37</sup> Takebayashi Kan’ichi, ed. *Kangakusha denki shūsei* (Tokyo: Azuma Shuppan, 1997), 1.

enlightened through a dedication to purely Neo-Confucian philosophy, immediately distinguishing himself from the numerous scholars who had only been superficially involved in the study of Neo-Confucianism or had studied it as merely part of a broader program of learning.

Hayashi Razan, a Neo-Confucianist who claimed that he learned from Seika and later became an intellectual advisor to the shogunate, argued that Seika was essentially the first scholar in Japan to appreciate the true meaning of Neo-Confucian philosophy. He wrote,

In our country, Hakase-ke scholars had studied Confucianism for a long time. They had only focused on analyzing commentaries on the Exegetical Studies of the Han through Tang periods; thus few people knew about the meaning of the philosophy of the Cheng brothers and the master Zhu. However, the Master [Seika] hired Kang Hang and several others under Lord Akamatsu's sponsorship to revise the commentaries of the classics with a deep understanding of Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>38</sup>

Razan implied that Seika distinguished himself from the numerous scholars who had only been superficially involved in the study of Confucianism or had studied it as merely part of a broader program of learning. As Frois and Xavier mentioned, Neo-Confucian texts were widely read, but for largely utilitarian purposes under the Rinzai influence. In this sense, it is not surprising that there had been no self-proclaimed Neo-Confucianists in Japan, although there were many intellectuals with Neo-Confucian knowledge. It was only with Seika that Neo-Confucianism and its practitioners finally emerged as an independent

---

<sup>38</sup> Hayashi Razan, "Seika sensei gyōjō," 8.

entity in the Japanese intellectual and political landscape. While Seika began as just another Zen monk learning Neo-Confucian texts at a temple, he soon diverged radically from this path, abandoning the priestly vocation and becoming a full-time Neo-Confucian scholar.

### **Conventional Perspectives on Seika's Conversion**

The direct momentum for Seika to be a Neo-Confucian scholar was the conversion. The majority of previous research has focused on the process of formulation of Neo-Confucian identity in Seika's mind, and then proposed that Seika converted because, while in the process of studying the Confucian Classics as part of his training for the Zen monkhood, he was enlightened through Neo-Confucian philosophy, and that this enlightenment opened his eyes to the inner contradictions of Buddhist logic just as *Kangakusha denki shūsei* suggests.

Ōta Seikyū argues that the combination of Seika's preliminary knowledge of Neo-Confucianism, learned at the temple, and his own philosophical enlightenment emerged collectively from his speculative engagement with the Neo-Confucian texts.<sup>39</sup> Kanaya Osamu states that Seika abandoned Zen Buddhism after he acquired philosophical insight from the Confucian Classics.<sup>40</sup> Takahashi Fumihiro proposes that Seika separated Neo-Confucianism from Zen Buddhism because he discovered a fundamental philosophical difference between the two of them.<sup>41</sup> The fundamental difference refers to the perspective on the human world. Joseph Spae argues that Seika especially hated Buddhism's deep

---

<sup>39</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika*, 54.

<sup>40</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, 449.

<sup>41</sup> Takahashi Fumihiro, "Jukyō to Bukkyō no ronsō," 149.

yearning towards the unseen, the unreal, and inherent while Confucianism deals with the actual world.<sup>42</sup>

In terms of epistemology, it is true that Seika expressed some suspicion of Buddhist epistemology. He was especially critical of the notion of amorphism in Buddhist logic, which suggested that the human mind determined an object's substantial existence:

Shakyamuni taught that everything, even heaven and hell, are in the human mind. Namely, if there is no mind, then there is no heaven and hell either. This logic signifies that the mind does not have substantial existence. If we deny the existence of the mind, there will be no human world. We should think about this.<sup>43</sup>

From this quote, it seems that Seika was suspicious of Buddhist epistemology from the Confucian perspective because Confucianists emphasized external principal in the existence, while Buddhists focused on mind-definition. Hayashi Razan also argued that Seika criticized what he saw as contradictions in Buddhist philosophy from a Neo-Confucian perspective. According to Razan, Seika left several critical comments on Buddhism, and even labeled Buddhism as heresy because it ignored human relationships, one of the cardinal values of Confucianism:

Nothing can exist outside of humanity [*jin*; Ch., *ren*], but Shakyamuni destroyed humanity by cutting off family relationships and friendship. I think this is

---

<sup>42</sup> Joseph Spae, "Buddhism as Viewed by Two Tokugawa Confucianists: Ito Jinsai's Letter to Doko and its Refutation by Sato Naokata," *Monumenta Nipponica* 5, no. 2 (1942): 168.

<sup>43</sup> Fujiwara Seika, "Kana shōri," in *Fujiwara Seika shū*, ed. Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978), 408.



heresy ... I believe humanity is the principal truth. If you are a real sage, you cannot abandon this world.<sup>44</sup>

This statement implies that Seika was frustrated by a specific Buddhist logic which he felt “destroyed humanity.” Razan also suggested that Seika criticized Buddhism by asserting that Confucianism was like a clear mirror reflecting truth, while Buddhism resembled a dark mirror obscuring truth: “A mirror has an indigenous brightness in it, but Buddhism turns it dark.”<sup>45</sup> He also argued that Seika stated that a human nature confined inside the mind might easily be swayed by Buddhist logic, and that people had to be wary of this.<sup>46</sup>

However, this apparently consistent and helpful account in fact obscures numerous problematic issues, leaving a few simple questions unanswered. Most obvious is the question of why, given that Fujiwara Seika had apparently studied Neo-Confucianism in Keiunji since the age of seven, it took almost thirty years for him to discover the philosophical value of Neo-Confucianism. At the same time there is another matter of why such a kind of philosophical conflict between Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism had not previously occurred in the minds of other Zen monks who studied Neo-Confucian works prior to Seika? If Zen monks adopted Neo-Confucianism as merely a tool for learning Chinese studies, then it would have been difficult for the monks including Seika to have

---

<sup>44</sup> Hayashi Razan, “Seika sensei gyōjō,” 11.

<sup>45</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1979), 347.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 947.

become spontaneously enlightened through Neo-Confucian philosophy just by reading the texts.

Therefore, some scholars argue that Seika must have had some sort of special, external influence which enabled him to formulate a Neo-Confucian consciousness, and presumably this influence was not available to other Zen monks. Abe Yoshio is one of the representative scholars examining Seika's conversion from this perspective. He argues that foreign Neo-Confucian scholars, especially Korean one affected Seika's formulation of his identity as Neo-Confucianist and this propelled Seika's conversion from Zen to Confucianism. He addresses this issue as follows:

Seika was a monk of Shōkokuji who learned Zen Buddhism. He loved poems and Taoist [or Daoist] thought, but he was deeply impressed by Neo-Confucianism after he encountered Hō Sanjōn (1548-1612) a member of the Korean embassy. Later, Seika was invited by Tokugawa Ieyasu, and gave him a lecture of *Essentials of the Government of the Zhenguan Period*. Around this time Seika became suspicious of Buddhist teaching, and subsequently he left Shōkokuji. He was able to read further in Neo-Confucian literature under the patronage of Akamatsu Hiromichi (1562-1600) and became more confident in Neo-Confucianism after he had a chance to meet Kang Hang (1567-1618), a Korean Neo-Confucian scholar who had been sent to Japan as a prisoner-of-war during Hideyoshi's first invasion of Korea. Finally, he manifested his will to fight against the Kiyowara (or Kiyohara) clan's interpretations of the Classics

through Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period or an eclectic mixing of Neo-Confucian and Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period commentaries.<sup>47</sup>

As the quotation above indicates, Abe finds his answer in Seika's increasing contacts with foreign Neo-Confucianists, such as members of the Korean embassy, which enabled him to develop a deep understanding of Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>48</sup> It is true that Seika had several chances to meet the members of the Korean embassy. Since the most members of the embassy were scholar-officials, it was natural that Zen monks in Kyoto the representative intellectuals treated them. Seika earned this chance because he was in Shōkokuji that time.

In 1590, he met the members of the Korean embassy at Daitokuji in Kyoto. Conventional Korean embassies had been visiting Japan to request that the authorities suppress Japanese pirates who had been plundering the east coast area of Korea, but this embassy had a special mission, having been charged with investigating the possibility of Toyotomi Hideyoshi invading Korea. Abe assumes that the Korean government dispatched elite members who had superior insight to complete this mission, and the encounter with these figures proved most profitable for Fujiwara Seika, opening his eyes to Neo-Confucian philosophy that he could not learn at the monastery.<sup>49</sup>

As a matter of fact, both Ambassador Hwang Yun-kil and Vice-Ambassador Kim Sōng-II in the embassy were prominent Neo-Confucian scholars in the Korean academy of

---

<sup>47</sup> Abe Yoshio, *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen* (Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978), 3.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

the day. Kim in particular was a well-known disciple of Yi Hwang, the most famous Neo-Confucian philosopher in Korean history. Hō Sanjōn was an assistant member accompanied these ambassadors. Abe believes that Hō provided Seika with inspiration in Neo-Confucian philosophy and criticism of Buddhist philosophy.

From their communications in writing, we can see that Seika greatly respected Hō Sanjōn. Hō skillfully explained the meaning of *sairyū* [Ch. *chairi*: one of Seika's studio name after a Daoist term] from the perspective of Confucianism and argued that the meaning [of *sairyū*] shows why Confucianism could not stand with Buddhism. In other words, he showed the stance of Confucianism while gently criticizing Daoism and Buddhism. We can imagine that Seika who was raised in the tradition of the coexistence of Buddhism and Confucianism, would be shocked and moved by the Confucian explanation on the meaning of his studio name as the souvenir from Hō.<sup>50</sup>

Abe also argues that Seika's encounter with Hō Sanjōn launched the critical momentum to convert from Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. In 1591, a year later, Seika met Hō Sanjōn, Toyotomi Hidetsugu (1568-1595) Hideyoshi's adopted son summoned monks of Kyoto Gozan to Shōkokuji to held a poem composing party. Seika once joined this party but never attended it again. Abe believes that Seika quit attending the party because his identity as a Zen monk was shaken after the contact with Hō.<sup>51</sup> Jan Boot has a different idea from Abe. He argues that Hō did not seem to have an intention to convert Seika because he did not employ Neo-Confucianists' cliché criticism on Buddhism arguing

---

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

that Buddhism destroys the human relationship while only discussed the methodological difference between Buddhism and Confucianism in finding the way or truth.<sup>52</sup> Considering these two contradictory ideas, Kwak Chŏngrye concludes that Hō's discussion on the difference between Neo-Confucianism and Buddhism was persuasive enough to affect Seika's philosophical identity if Hō had the intention to convert Seika or not.<sup>53</sup>

Another source of external stimulation for Seika was Kang Hang. Kang too was a Neo-Confucian scholar, but had mobilized a civilian militia to fight the Japanese army during Hideyoshi's invasion. He had subsequently been captured and brought to Japan as a prisoner-of-war. Despite his lowly status as a prisoner, Kang Hang was politely treated by Akamatsu Hiromichi who loved scholarship. In 1596, after failing to travel to Ming China, Seika stayed in Fushimi under the patronage of Akamatsu, and there met Kang Hang.

At Akamatsu's request, Seika and Kang Hang collaborated to produce a new edition of the commentaries on Confucian Classics. Abe pays particular attention to this task. According to him, Seika's role in the project was limited to supervision and adding the Japanese reading marks on Kang Hang's writings. In adding the Japanese readings, Seika followed the Neo-Confucian commentaries rather than the Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period commentaries used by the Kiyowara family, which was at the time the most authoritative intellectual group in Japan concerning interpretation of the Confucian Classics. Abe argues that through this project Seika not only successfully obtained knowledge of

---

<sup>52</sup> Willem Jan Boot, "Twegyehak kwa Ilbon," *Twegye Hakpo* 31, no. 439-468 (1981): 448.

<sup>53</sup> Kwak Chŏngrye, "Aknok Hō Sŏng kwa Edo Yuhak ūi barŭng," *Ōmun Yŏnku* 147(2010): 431-32.

Confucian terminology and writing styles, but also became aware of the distinguishing characteristics of Neo-Confucian concepts.<sup>54</sup>

In Japan they only transmitted the learning of the Confucianists of the Han period and do not yet know the philosophy of *li* of the Song scholars. For four hundred years they have not been able to remedy the faults of their inveterate tradition.<sup>55</sup>

Kang Hang was not impressed with the quality of Neo-Confucian studies in Japan. He appears to undervalue the level of Japanese Confucianism due to its lack of understanding of Neo-Confucianism. Abe assumes that this strong attitude of Kang Hang's as a Neo-Confucian philosopher somehow contributed to Seika's deep understanding of Neo-Confucian philosophy. That is to say, he suggests that Hō Sanjōn urged Seika to raise a suspicious mind on Buddhism and Kang Hang helped him to establish a solid identity as Neo-Confucianist.

Abe Yoshio's theory became a standard since he was one of the most prominent authorities in the research field of the Confucian exchanges between Japan and Korea. The first edition of *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen* written by Abe was published in 1965, but many later scholars still borrow from Abe's account. For instance, Murakami Tsuneo, in his work *Jusha Kang Hang to Nihon* published in 1991, agrees with Abe and asserts that Seika converted from Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism after he learned from Korean ambassadors and Kang Hang. Murakami argues that Seika planned to go to Ming China because he believed that there was nobody capable to teach Neo-Confucian scholarship in

---

<sup>54</sup> Abe Yoshio, 94.

<sup>55</sup> Kang Hang, *Kanyangnok*, trans. Yi Ūlho (Seoul: Sōhe Munjip, 2005), 141.

Japan. Although Seika was disappointed after his plan became unsuccessful, he found a motivation to research Neo-Confucianism after he encountered Kang Hang.<sup>56</sup> Azuma Jūji who published the article in 2009 about the history of Confucian academies established in the early Tokugawa period simply quotes Abe's work as the premise for understanding Seika's academic background.<sup>57</sup>

This idea is widely endorsed in Korea, where many scholars believe that Kang Hang transferred Neo-Confucianism to Fujiwara Seika. Yi Tonghi introduces Kang Hang as a sort of an evangelist of Neo-Confucianism to Japan.<sup>58</sup> Sŏng Hejun takes Seika's encounter with the Korean embassy and Kang Hang as the two of three major factors of the development of Neo-Confucianism in Japan.<sup>59</sup> According to their logic, Kang Hang taught Neo-Confucian philosophy to Seika and Seika then established Tokugawa Neo-Confucianism, making Kang Hang the direct ancestor of Japanese Neo-Confucianism. Far from being esoteric trivia, this belief has become widespread, almost to the point of becoming a sort of axiom in Korea. In 2001, Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of the Korean government named Kang Hang the Monthly Cultural Figure of March, to honor "his transition of Neo-Confucianism to Japan."<sup>60</sup> During 1990 and 2005, the Korean

---

<sup>56</sup> Murakami Tsuneo and Sin Kisu, *Jusha Kang Hang to Nihon* (Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1991), 125-30.

<sup>57</sup> Azuma Jūji, "Edo shoki ni okeru gakujuku no hatten to Chūgoku Chōsen," *Higashi Ajia bunka kōryū kenkyū* 2 (2009): 48.

<sup>58</sup> Yi Tonghi, *Tong Asia Chujahak pigyo yŏnku* (Daegu: Keimyung Dehak Chulpanbu, 2006), 315.

<sup>59</sup> Sŏng Hejun, "Twegye ūi sŏnbi jŏngsin i Ilbon e kichin yŏnghyang," in *Hankuk ūi Sŏnbi chŏngsin*, ed. Kim Sanghun (Busan: Twegeyhaek Busan Yŏnkuwon, 2012), 31.

<sup>60</sup> [http://nationalculture.mcst.go.kr/person/data/person\\_view.jsp?cp\\_seq=121](http://nationalculture.mcst.go.kr/person/data/person_view.jsp?cp_seq=121) (accessed August 8, 2011)

government designated 187 people as monthly cultural figures to celebrate their distinguished achievement in Korean history. Including Kang Hang in the list reveals the Korean mindset regarding transition of Neo-Confucian scholarship from Korea to Japan as the historically significant event.



## Chapter 2: Revisiting Seika's Conversion

### Tradition Transition Paradigm

In general, conversion is defined as a transfer of primary religious affiliation,<sup>1</sup> and the case of Seika seems to fit this definition because it is said that he converted from Zen Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. Religious study determines the notion of conversion in several ways. Lewis Rambo, professor of San Francisco Theological Seminary, organizes the sorts of conversion in five categories and provides us with specific definition of each conversion: tradition transition, institution transition, affiliation, defection, and intensification.

Tradition transition occurs when a convert leaves one major religious tradition for another. For example, conversion from Islam to Buddhism or Hinduism to Christianity are exchanges of worldview that imply new social habits, a reordering of family structures, and so forth. Such a transition is sometimes painful and often yields some kind of syncretism.

Institution transition involves a conversion from one community to another, but both are within the same major tradition. When a person moves from Presbyterianism to the Lutheran church or leaves guru Muktananda to follow Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, it is a reorientation within the same religion. Although it is a minor adjustment, it is a conversion nonetheless.

---

<sup>1</sup> J. D. Y. Peel, "Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies: Ijebu and Buganda," *Past & Present* 77 (1977): 108.

Affiliation is movement from no commitment or a nominal one to a strong commitment. For instance, secular university students who join the Unification Church or The Way International become seriously committed to a religious institution, perhaps for the first time.

Defection is included because a growing number of people are converting away from conventional religion. They repudiate their past religious worldview in favor of a new, not necessarily religious, world view. A college student may convert to Marxism or atheistic humanism as a means of rejecting their previous religious tradition. In addition, a number of defections are an actual loss of faith which can require a reorientation as profound as if the people defecting from the movements had adopted a new faith.

Intensification is the revitalization of a commitment to a religious persuasion with which long-standing membership has been maintained. Born-again conversions are generally intensifications. Chuck Colson is a good example of someone who intensifies his or her commitment. And most people who go forward at Billy Graham Crusades have had long-term associations with Christianity and are simply intensifying that commitment.<sup>2</sup>

Concerning this categorization, we may identify Seika's conversion as the case of a tradition transition since he moved from a Zen Buddhism to a Neo-Confucianism. Rambo argues that a tradition transition occurs with exchanges of worldview, and in this regard

---

<sup>2</sup> Lewis R. Rambo, "Interview: Lewis R. Rambo," Dialogue Ireland.  
<http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/resources/dciarchive/zinterviewrambo.html> (accessed July 4, 2011)

previous scholars have posited that Seika converted because, while studying the Confucian Classics as part of their training for the Zen monkhood, he obtained insight into Neo-Confucian philosophy and became aware of the ‘inner contradictions’ of Buddhist logic. That is to say, this implies that Seika exchanged his Buddhist worldview for a Neo-Confucian one. This is a sort of axiom in the field of the research on Seika.

Certainly, some primary sources and texts about Seika that I introduced in the previous chapter display that his conversion to Neo-Confucianism was caused by anti-Buddhist sentiment. However, we should remember that the motives and processes of people’s action to shift their religious faith from one to another are too complicated to determine in a single way because it is an event that transpires within the mind. Simon Coleman suggests that conversion is a fuzzy term. Sometimes it appears as a simple transfer within religious affiliations but in many cases it includes radical psychological and spiritual transformation and is connected to economic, cultural, and political contexts.<sup>3</sup> Lewis Rambo argues that conversion is an overall process of religious change that occurs in a dynamic force field of people, events, ideologies, institutions, expectations and experiences. The effects of these factors are interactive and cumulative over time. Thus, conversion in its largest sense is best seen as a complex process, not an event.<sup>4</sup> However, previous scholars have too easily defined Seika’s conversion, with the lack of consideration

---

<sup>3</sup> Simon Coleman, “Continuous Conversion? The Rhetoric, Practice, and Rhetorical Practice of Charismatic Protestant Conversion,” in *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, ed. Robert T. Anderson, et al. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc, 2003), 17-8.

<sup>4</sup> Rambo, *Understanding Religious Conversion*, 5.

on the entire matrix of Seika's life, as the tradition transition caused by metaphysical conflicts.

If we accept the account arguing that that Seika converted to Neo-Confucianism solely for the reason of the philosophical conflict, then we should prove two theses first. Most of all, we should prove that Seika was an exclusive Neo-Confucian philosopher who did not compromise with other heterodoxies against Neo-Confucianism. Second, he was also an anti-Buddhist who showed zero tolerance for Buddhist solutions for the human being's afterlife. A close examination of the sources, however, reveals that Seika's philosophical writings contain multiple, contradictory accounts which conflict with the previous research's conclusion suggesting that anti-Buddhist sentiment drove Seika's conversion.

### **Eclectic Nature of Seika's Scholarship**

The first problem in concluding Seika's conversion as the result of the philosophical conflict is the eclectic nature of Seika's scholarship. If one is to examine Seika's conversion through the lens of a philosophical shift, there remains one more thesis to consider, namely the issue of whether he was exclusively committed to Neo-Confucian philosophy. It could certainly be asserted that Seika was exclusively Neo-Confucianist in terms of his profession, since he served as a full-timed Neo-Confucianist after he abandoned the affiliation of Zen monk. This turns into a different story, however, if we define an exclusive Neo-Confucianist as a follower of Neo-Confucianism who denies other heterodoxies that may contradict Neo-Confucian orthodoxy.

Was it the case that Seika abandoned Buddhism because as a follower of Neo-Confucianism he would be unable to continue as a Zen monk, or because his loyalty to the philosophy of Neo-Confucianism did not allow him to adopt other ideas which conflicted with the major philosophy in his mind? Perhaps this may have been the case if Seika was a firmly orthodox Neo-Confucianist in his outlook. Seika, however, was not a philosopher who stuck to orthodox Neo-Confucian thought.

Abe Yoshio argues that Korean Neo-Confucianists such as Hō Sanjōn and Kang Hang significantly affected the formulation of Seika's Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>5</sup> According to Abe, Seika respected *Dialogues with the Master Yan-Ping*, Zhu Xi's dialogues with his teacher, as the main creed of his philosophy.<sup>6</sup> Seika certainly seemed to agree with Zhu Xi's epistemological concepts but he did not slavishly adhere to Zhu Xi's entire system. For instance, Seika differed from Zhu Xi in his interpretation of the *Great Learning*, which constituted a significant issue for Chinese Neo-Confucianists.

What the Great Learning teaches, is to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.<sup>7</sup>

In this paragraph, James Legge one of the representative English translators of the *Great Learning* in English chose the expression of "to renovate the people to translate the Chinese term *qin min*, however the term *qin min* had been generally translated as "to have

---

<sup>5</sup> Abe, *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen*, 14-7.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>7</sup> "The Great Learning," in *The Confucian Analects, the Great Learning & the Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. and ed. by James Legge (New York: Dover Publications, 1971), 356.

affection for the people” instead of “to renovate the people.” It was Zhu Xi who claimed that *qin min* must be a mistaken transcription of *xin min* meaning “to renovate the people.”

Zhu Xi’s opinion on this point clearly reflected the elitist attitude of Song Chinese Neo-Confucianists toward leading the people. This interpretation subsequently became a major bone of contention between Zhu Xi’s school and Wang Yangming’s proponents. This became one of the most famous philosophical discourses in Neo-Confucianism. Traditionally, Confucianists had believed that the people would automatically have a good mind if their ruler had superior morality. Thus, *the Great Learning* also suggests that self-cultivation is a ruler’s fundamental qualification in Neo-Confucian thought.

The ancients, who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons.<sup>8</sup>

If a self-cultivated ruler has affection for the people, the people who were treated with affection by the self-cultivated ruler would naturally follow the rulers’ way to correct their minds. This is the logic the Great Learning uses the term of *qin min*. However, Zhu Xi did not agree with this traditional idea. He believed that an individual moral enlightenment in a ruler’s mind would not automatically control the people’s behavior. Therefore, he suggested the term *xin min* instead of *qin min* to emphasize the active role of rulers and elites in correcting people’s mind and behavior. In this sense, Shimada Kenji states that an idealism pursuing the harmonization of ethics and politics is one of the major tenets of

---

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 357.

Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Wang Yangming (1472-1529) criticized Zhu Xi's idea and rejected Zhu's switch from *qin min* to *xin min*. He believed that the people's mind itself was a principle which had no need to search for an external one, thus righteousness was internal.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, Wang believed that *qin min* was a correct way to encourage people to spontaneously discover the principle in for their mind.

In this debate Seika followed the interpretation “to care for people” instead of “to renovate people” in his commentary on the *Great Learning*.

Upon “to have affection for the people,” “the people” refers to the four professions: samurai, peasant, artisan, and merchant. In the term of “to care”, there is a mind of love and nurture.<sup>11</sup>

Seika clearly showed why he chose *qin min* and also confirmed it in the conversation with Hayashi Razan. Once Razan specifically addressed a question to Seika on this point, Seika answered that “to have affection for the people” already included the meaning of “to renovate people,” and thus “to have affection for the people” would be a suitable choice.<sup>12</sup> If we accept Abe's account suggesting that Seika's ideas of Neo-Confucianism was heavily affected by Korean Neo-Confucianism admiring Zhu Xi's philosophy as the orthodoxy, it becomes quite difficult to understand why Seika conflicted with Zhu Xi.

---

<sup>9</sup> Shimada Kenji, *Shushigaku to Yōmeigaku* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967), 27.

<sup>10</sup> Philip J. Ivanhoe, *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition: The Thought of Mengzi and Wang Yangming* (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co Inc, 2002), 56.

<sup>11</sup> Fujiwara Seika, “Daigaku yōryaku,” in *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, ed. Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, NST, vol. 28 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975). 42.

<sup>12</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 1: 347.

As a matter of fact, Seika borrowed several ideas from the commentaries of Lin Zhao-en (1517-1598) – a Chinese Confucianist who had suggested assimilation of the three traditions (Confucianism, Buddhism and Daoism) – when he interpreted the Confucian Classics.<sup>13</sup> Lin had a syncretic approach to the interpretation of the classics and it is said that he was heavily influenced by Buddhist and Daoist techniques of meditation.<sup>14</sup>

Master Lin says that the commentary by the Master Zheng in the Han period says that *zhi* means ‘knowing what causes goodness, evilness, fortune, and misfortune’. *Ge* means ‘coming,’ and *wu* means ‘thing’ same as ‘affair.’ What a person says makes the affair to come in response to one’s preferences. Sima Guang says that *ge* refers to ‘resist’ same as ‘block’. By blocking external things, we will know the ultimate Way. Zhu Xi says that *ge* means ‘attain.’ Wu means ‘things.’ By investigating, we attain the principle of things. Wang Yangming says that *ge* means correcting wrongness to return to rightness. In this way, several theories drive the people to be easily confused. Here I explain only with the summary of Master Lin’s interpretation and thus will not add others.<sup>15</sup>

In the explanation of *ge wu*, one of the most significant concept in the Confucian epistemology, Seika adopted Lin’s interpretation while he rejected Zhu and Wang. This reveals that he was not a typical Neo-Confucianist exclusively following Zhu Xi’s teachings. Boot argues that this is the critical evidence showing Seika’s ideas of Neo-

---

<sup>13</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, 360.

<sup>14</sup> Bowring, “Fujiwara Seika and the Great Learning:” 445.

<sup>15</sup> Fujiwara Seika, “Daigaku yōryaku,” 45.



Confucianism were not formulated by Korean Neo-Confucianism.<sup>16</sup> According to Boot, the argument proposing that the amount of the Confucian books from Korea was not bigger than the counterparts from China and Japan. He examined titles in Razan's library and found only 4% out of the total bibliography were from Korea.<sup>17</sup> Hence, Boot asserts, "The incidence of Korean books must not blind us to the fact that on the basis of these figures a very much more convincing case could be made out for the decisive importance of Chinese books or of the native Japanese tradition."<sup>18</sup>

The other hand, Ōta Seikyū argues that Seika did not confine his ideas to Zhu Xi's theory.<sup>19</sup> Herman Ooms also adds that Seika was concerned about the tendency of his contemporaries to focus on separating Zhu Xi's learning from Wang Yangming's and Confucianism from Buddhism, rather than considering the underlying similarities between these modes of thought.<sup>20</sup> In other words, both Ōta and Ooms argue that Fujiwara Seika's scholarship was strongly eclectic in character.

Imanaka goes further and argues that this eclectic approach was a unique characteristic of Seika's scholarly methodology. He explains that Seika's complex scholarly background was likely the cause of his eclectic methodology. According to Imanaka, Seika was taught by Bunbō Sōshō (?-?) a Zen monk with a scholarly lineage of Neo-Confucianism, and once became an adopted son of Yoshida Kanemi (1535-1610), the

---

<sup>16</sup> Boot, "Twegyehak kwa Ilbon:" 448.

<sup>17</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 74.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>19</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika*, 136.

<sup>20</sup> Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 115.

head of Yoshida Shintoism. In addition, Kanemi's father, Yoshida Kanemigi (1516-1573), was a former member of the Kiyowara family, one of the major clans of Hakase-ke. Thus, Imanaka suggests that Seika had the opportunity to explore a wide range of diverse scholarship, and that this broad personal background was what seems to have later inspired his eclectic attitude.<sup>21</sup>

Previous scholars consider eclecticism the unique element of Seika's scholarship. In fact, however, Seika was not even unique in terms of his complicated scholarly background. Zen monks who learned Neo-Confucianism in the temples also experienced a hybrid academic lineage as Seika did. We can see an example of this in the Ashikaga Gakkō, a Zen academy established in 1439.

This old academy was one of the largest educational institutions for Zen monks and taught Chinese literature. In this institution, the principal was a higher-ranked member of the Zen clergy, while all of the enrolled students were automatically registered as Zen monks. Monks from other sect than Zen were also welcomed to join the program, and the graduates of this academy were often hired by central or local political authorities. Tenkai, one of Tokugawa Ieyasu's most trusted advisors, graduated from this school.<sup>22</sup> He was from Tendai. However, the position of the principal of this academy always went to seniors of Rinzai.

It was literally a school for Zen monks, but the curriculum of the school was not confined to the realm of Zen Buddhism. The teachers mainly taught Neo-Confucian texts,

---

<sup>21</sup> Imanaka Kanji, *Kinsei Nihon seiji shisōshi no seiritsu* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1972), 22.

<sup>22</sup> Wajima Yoshio, *Chūsei no Jugaku* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1996), 113.

but they also extended their courses to various fields, including even those abhorred by orthodox Confucians, such as Daoism, military strategy, and encyclopedic studies.<sup>23</sup> Bunbō Sōshō, Seika's mentor at Shōkokuji, had himself been taught by Ninjo Shūgyō (? - ?), a graduate of Ashikaga Gakkō. Interestingly, Shūgyō also taught Jōtai, the monk who engaged in the famous argument with Seika at Nijō castle.

In this regard, Seika's favorable attitude towards eclectic methodology was not an innovation, but rather resembled the conventional way of studying in Zen academies. If we admit that these accounts are indeed considerable, then what reason do we have to continue to believe that Seika, who willingly accepted every school of scholarship into his intellectual sphere, simply abandoned Buddhism to pursue Neo-Confucianism exclusively? Previous scholars have not answered to this question.

### **Mixed Attitude toward Buddhism**

The super-worldliness suggested by Buddhist worldview had been the constant target of Neo-Confucianists. Morimoto Junichirō argues that Japanese Neo-Confucianism in the early modern period criticized Buddhism's unrealistic worldview, which simply ignored the real world of human beings.<sup>24</sup> The conventional interpretation of Seika's conversion exactly follows this perspective. Meanwhile, we can see somewhat mixed attitude toward Buddhism from Seika's essays and his real life. Considering the eclectic methodology in his scholarship, this kind of mixed attitude is not surprising. However, with this attitude, it

---

<sup>23</sup> Kawase Kazuma, *Ashikaga Gakkō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1974), 47-50.

<sup>24</sup> Morimoto Junichirō, *Nihon shisōshi*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Tokyo: Shinnihon Shuppansha, 1982), 21.

must be difficult to depict Seika as an anti-Buddhist who willingly converted for philosophical conflicts between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism.

Seika respected the *Great Learning* as the most important text for learning Confucian values. He even asserted that for understanding Confucianism, the *Great Learning* could by itself replace millions of books.<sup>25</sup> In deed, Zhu Xi who categorized the *Great Learning*, *Analects*, *Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean* as Four Books also recommended the *Great Learning* as the first text to enter Confucian scholarship. The first sentence of the *Great Learning* is as follows:

What the *Great Learning* teaches is to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and to rest in the highest excellence.<sup>26</sup>

The *Great Learning* suggests that illustrious virtue is the primary concept of the Confucian way, and Seika argued that the ‘illustrious virtue’ must refer to human relationships.<sup>27</sup> This implies that the notion of human relationships played a central role in the system of Seika’s philosophy. Seika also lamented the social situation of Japan which experienced the long-term civil war to lose the respect of human relationship.

Cruel atmosphere of the civil war ruined the people’s heart and the people would say it is a usual thing if somebody kills his mother.<sup>28</sup>

---

<sup>25</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, 381.

<sup>26</sup> “The *Great Learning*,” 356.

<sup>27</sup> Fujiwara Seika, “Daigaku yōryaku,” 383.

<sup>28</sup> Fujiwara Seika, “Kana shōri,” 75.

Seika apparently emphasized the significance of human relationships as had other Neo-Confucian scholars. Given this primary position of human relationships in Seika's philosophy, it seems to be understandable that he would have been discontented to some extent with Buddhism. Razan argued that Seika criticized Buddhism as a heresy because it forced the people to abandon human relationships and social responsibility.<sup>29</sup> Does this human relationship issue, however, really drive Seika to anti-Buddhism? On this problem, Nomura Maki provides us with an insightful argument.

There is a pattern in the Confucianists' criticism on Buddhism. It is targeting Buddhist concept of *shukke* (renouncing the world) to blame that it put the priority to personal enlightenment than parents-children or social relationship and eventually teach egoism to the people. Thus they consider Buddhism an anti-social and anti-moral teaching.

Considering, however, Buddhist monks' situation in the early modern Japan, this criticism is not necessarily relevant because Buddhist temples became a part of government system under the parish (*terauke*) system. Through this system, temples ironically became in charge of the family registration control, one of the most important social work. In addition, some sects fully allowed the monks to have wife and children, thus the criticism that Buddhism destroys family relationship does not stand... This is the unique character of Japanese Buddhism different from the counterparts in China and Korea.<sup>30</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Hayashi Razan, "Seika sensei gyōjō," 11.

<sup>30</sup> Nomura Maki, "Kinsei nihon ni okeru jubutsu icchiron to sono denkai," *Hokudai Hōgaku Ronshū* 55, no. 3 (2004): 908-9.

The parish system was created by the Tokugawa shogunate to ban Christianity; thus it emerged much later than when Seika was in the temple. However, Nomura's account suggesting the coexistence of Buddhism and the family relationship is important argument to examine Seika's life as a monk.

In Seika's case, he had maintained his secular human relationships even after he became a monk. Seika was a monk of Keiunji Temple when his father and elder brother were killed on the battlefield, whereupon it was Seika who led the rest of the family members to Kyoto and reorganized the family, appointing his brother as the householder. He then requested Toyotomi Hideyoshi to avenge his dead family. This implies that Seika played a central role in his family even though he "renounced the world."

Seika was even able to enter Shōkokuji, one of the major temples of the Kyoto Gozan, in the first place was because of support from his uncle. As a matter of fact, the Zen monk position in the early modern Japan was not as religious as we expect. Precisely speaking, becoming a Zen monk was, in many cases, a vocational choice for noble people. In Japanese traditional family system, the first son or designated son inherited almost everything of the house.

Meanwhile, the other sons needed to seek other livelihoods. For them, joining a Zen monastery was a way to attain social prestige. Zen monks enjoyed stronger relationships with political authorities, including those with the second or third sons of the noble classes and the royal members who had relatively insignificant positions and roles in their families. Therefore, many noble members became Zen monks and Gozan became the center of a huge privileged network club. Needless to say, many people who sought secular success wanted to affiliate with the Rinzai Zen monastery. It was then no coincidence that, Seika,

the second son, became a monk of Keiunzi in the age of 7 and his uncles were Zen monks in Kyōto as well. In this regard, it is unclear how much religious passion Seika brought to the monkhood.

Another example comparable to that of Seika is Tani Jichū (1598-1649), also a Neo-Confucian convert from Buddhism. Jichū had little connection with shogunate politics. However, he had greater influence on the development of the Neo-Confucian philosophical school in Tosa domain. Little is known of his personal life. His father was a monk of the Sōtō Zen sect and he himself followed his father's path to be a Zen monk. He abandoned his status as a Buddhist monk and became a Neo-Confucian. Tosa was the site of the famous Neo-Confucian philosophy school, the so-called Nangaku School established by Minamimura Baiken (?-?). Tani Jichū succeeded to leadership of Baiken's school; among his pupils was Yamazaki Ansai (himself a convert from Zen), one of the most influential early Tokugawa Neo-Confucian philosophers.

Jichū's had been a Pure Land Buddhist monk, who had ostensibly converted to Neo-Confucianism because of his hatred of Buddhist criticism of family relationships.<sup>31</sup> However, in fact Jichū's father was a monk of Pure Land Buddhism, and Jichū followed in his father's footsteps by becoming a monk of the same sect. Just like his father Jichū had a family and ran a family business teaching Chinese studies at a small private school in the town, also in his capacity as a monk of Pure Land Buddhism. Both Seika and Jichū personally experienced the ability of Buddhism to compromise with secular relationships,

---

<sup>31</sup> Kōchiken Kyōikukai, *Tani Jichū* (Kochi: Kōchiken Kyōikukai, 1936), 3.

and it is therefore hard to believe that either of them abhorred Buddhism as a result of human relationship issues.

These two cases show that theoretically Buddhism suggested abandoning human relationships, but in practice it had already compromised with the secular circumstances and needs of Japanese society.

Another easy target of the Confucian criticism to Buddhism was its epistemological logic. It is said that Seika was critical of the notion of amorphism in Buddhist logic, which suggested that the human mind determined an object's substantial existence. In fact, the epistemological discourse on the role of the human mind was one of the major debates among Confucian philosophers.

Wang Yangming's theory of mind and the world is a good example. Wang argued that objects do not exist independent of the action of the mind, since the mind determines their shapes – a position clearly at odds with Zhu Xi's perspective, which focused on external principles existing outside of the mind. This issue prompted intense argument; some fundamentalist followers of Zhu Xi learning who were of an anti-Buddhist inclination criticized Wang's ideas as mere copies of Buddhist logic. Seika was one of these Confucianists who criticized the Buddhist epistemology. To the contrary, at the same time, however, Seika continued to respect Shakyamuni's teachings:

In Buddhism, each sect has different theories on the world and truth. It is to accept all kinds of people's characters when Buddhism purifies the minds of the people and pacifies the world.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Fujiwara Seika, "Kana shōri," 408.



Seika actually appreciated the positive role of Buddhism in society. If he regarded Buddhism as a heresy disturbing people from finding the truth, he would reject Buddhism entirely, but he did not. He seemed to complain what was happening in Zen monasteries, but Seika's criticism of Buddhism was directed at the secular everyday life and corruption of Zen monks, rather than Buddhist philosophy itself. He wrote,

Shakyamuni and his disciples did not have any of their own property aside from daily food, in order to expel material desire from their mind. However, today monks are busy earning riches and decorating their temples with gold and silver. Although they say that they pray for the people, they follow neither Shakyamuni's true law nor the virtue of Shintoism.”<sup>33</sup>

Here, Seika does not direct his attack against Buddhist philosophy, but rather the great gulf between Buddhist ideals and the corrupt and degenerate behavior of those who claim to serve those ideals in the world: the Zen monkhood. When he was in the monastery, he belonged to the western rank which was in charge of meditation, rituals, and scholarship. Meanwhile, the Zen monks in the eastern rank managed the monastic budget and property. Zen monasteries in that time were involved with financing and real estate business, thus even Ashikaga Yoshimochi (1386-1428) the 4<sup>th</sup> shogun of the Muromachi shogunate once applied for a loan from Shōkokuji.<sup>34</sup> Through these activities, some of the eastern rank monks accumulated great wealth for their own sake.

---

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>34</sup> Takeda Kazuo, *Gozan to chūsei no shakai* (Tokyo: Dōseisha, 2007), 5.

Since there was a gap between the duty of the western and the eastern rank, these two ranks had tension in the monastery. In 1464, Shōkokuji pleaded the shogunate to punish its monks in the eastern rank, who were blamed for decreases in the tax income of the temple.<sup>35</sup> At a glance, it seems that the temple asked the eastern rank monks to take the responsibility for the failure of the management of the monastery budget, but also it reveals that the eastern rank had influence beyond the internal supervision of the temple.

However, no matter how economically successful they became, they did not have a chance to enjoy political relationships, and this caused complaint from the eastern rank monks. In 1489, Shōkokuji hosted a poem-composing party and as usual they invited only the western rank monks, and the eastern rank monks not invited to the party raised a violent demonstration. The eastern rank finally exploded against the discrimination. The senior monks of Shōkokuji failed to suppress this uprising and requested the shogunate to arbitrate this incident. Yoshihisa, the shogun dismissed the uprising monks by asserting that the eastern rank people were not qualified to attend the party due to their lower scholarly quality.<sup>36</sup>

Asakura Hisashi argues that this incident shows how poetry presentations at the party were highly regarded and how Zen monks were eager to express their literary skills. He seems to understand this riot as the eruption of the eastern division monks' ambition of literary expression. I think his argument is extremely naïve, since it ignores the actual contexts of the life of the eastern division monks. This incident was the result of an inner

---

<sup>35</sup> SS, pt. 908, vol. 7, 168, accessed August 13, 2011, DNSSD (020100190708)

<sup>36</sup> Asakura Hisashi, *Zenrin no bungaku: shikai to sono shūhen* (Osaka: Seibundō Shuppan, 2004), 7.

struggle for the access of scholarship between the eastern and the western divisions and the obvious evidence testifying that Zen monks in monasteries had a strong ambition to obtain chances to participate in politics because the party was a critical opportunity to appeal to recruiters from politics. More significant was how this opportunity had been given to selective members in the monastery.

The monks in the western rank obviously disdained and discriminated against the eastern monks. In 1455, there was a huge ceremony that the shogun Ashikaga Yoshimasa (1436-1490) attended in Shōkokuji. After the ceremony, senior monks from other temples quickly left the place without attending the reception dinner for some reason. It was because they were displeased about having to eat with the eastern rank monks of Shōkokuji at the same table. They who came from the western rank of other temples claimed that the eastern monks did not deserve to have a meal with the western division people.<sup>37</sup> Seika used to be a member of the western rank, and his criticism of the monks who were “busy earning riches and decorating their temples with gold and silver” was rather the revival of his old memory as a western rank monk of Shōkokuji than criticism of Buddhism itself.

These accounts reveal that Seika’s actual attitude towards Buddhism was markedly different from what previous scholars have assumed. Seika expressed some doubts about Buddhist logic, but his criticism of Buddhism was specific and did not develop into abhorrence of the religion itself, which he rejected neither generally nor in his own life. Furthermore, even in the realm of philosophy Seika revealed a mixed attitude towards Buddhism rather than one of wholesale rejection.

---

<sup>37</sup> Nakahara no Yasutomi, *Yasutomi-ki 4*, ZST, vol. 40 (Tokyo: Rinsen shoten, 1965), 391.

In an attempt to resolve this contradiction, Minamoto Ryōen argues that Seika had been a strict and exclusive Neo-Confucianist until the age of 38-39, whereupon he changed his attitude and turned more eclectic, becoming open to other philosophies including Buddhism.<sup>38</sup> However, this argument is not convincing because Seika had already demonstrated an eclectic attitude towards Buddhism both in his studies and lifestyle, from when he left the monastery around 1591 at the age of 30.

In the previous chapter, I detailed how Seika quit attending the poem composing party hosted by Hidetsugu in 1591. That year Seika left Shōkokuji after he had some conflicts with his uncle Jusen who helped him to enter the temple. It is unclear why he did not join the party and what problems he had with his uncle, but scholars have attempted to link these issues to Seika's conversion to Neo-Confucianism. Hayashi Razan argued that Seika did not attend the poem composing party for Zen monks anymore simply because his personal identity as a Neo-Confucianist would not allow it.<sup>39</sup> Upon Seika's departure from the monastery, Ōta Seikyū assumes that Seika's increasingly pro-Confucian attitude might have provoked his uncle's position as a higher-ranked monk.<sup>40</sup> That is to say, they assume that Seika already established his own identity as an anti-Buddhist Confucian scholar in the temple and this forced him to leave the temple to abandon the Zen affiliation.

However, these arguments are contradicted by Seika's actual moves after he left the temple. Certainly Seika left the temple and became an independent scholar, but he did not

---

<sup>38</sup> Minamoto Ryōen, *Kinsei shoki no zitsugaku shisō no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1980), 160.

<sup>39</sup> Hayashi Razan, "Seika sensei gyōjō," 6.

<sup>40</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika*, 25.

abandon the advantages afforded by his Shōkokuji career. Even after he left the temple, he always introduced himself as the primus of Shōkokuji. The primus was the future candidate as abbot of Shōkokuji and the leader of elite monks researching scholarship. Without question, he gained several opportunities in politics as a result of this background, since Shōkokuji was a famous educational institute as well as a Zen monastery, and political leaders preferred for their intellectual assistants higher-ranked Zen monks in possession of broad literary knowledge.

For instance, Seika also became a personal mentor to Toyotomi Hidetoshi (1582-1602), another adopted son of Hideyoshi, and then also served Ieyasu as a document drafter, at the recommendation of Ōmura Yūko (1536-1596), one of the entourages (*otogishū*) of Hideyoshi. Ōmura was also former monk of Shōkokuji and earned Hideyoshi's trust by composing *Tenshōki*, the chronicle of Hideyoshi's military campaign.<sup>41</sup> He also came from Harima the same place where Seika came from. Far from being embarrassed by his background as a Buddhist monk, or attempting to hide or distance himself from it, Seika consciously employed it as a tool to access opportunities he otherwise would have been unlikely to reach.

Ōmura was also one of the breakaway members from Buddhism but he too maintained a good relationship with Buddhist members. For instance, Ōmura gave a lecture of the chronicles that he composed to the monks of Hon'ganji by request of Kyō'nyo (1558-1614), the abbot.<sup>42</sup> This reveals that renunciation of the status of monk was no

---

<sup>41</sup> Yamamuro Kyōko, *Ōgon taikō: yume o enjita tenkabito* (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992), 12-3.

<sup>42</sup> DNS, pt 17, vol. 11, 50, accessed July 21, 2012, DNSSD (020100106095)

necessarily related to anti-Buddhism, and we can apply this to the case of Seika who left the affiliated temple.

Thanks to this kind of connection, Seika successfully earned the attention from the top of the Toyotomi clan and other daimyō. Seika had traveled with Hidetsugu to the base camp for the first Korean campaign in Nagoya (in Kyushu) in 1592, and in the following year, he went to Edo to visit Tokugawa Ieyasu, who had recently established his headquarters there. Seika gave Ieyasu a lecture on the *Essentials of the Government of the Zhenguan Period*.

There is another example of Seika's capitalization of his Rinzaï network. Seika encountered several Chinese merchants when he came to Kagoshima in 1596 to learn about foreign countries such as Ryūkyū and Phillippines as well as China.<sup>43</sup> He once planed to go to Ming China to do further research on Neo-Confucian texts but it is said that this plan was abandoned after his journey to China was ruined by the typhoon. Many researchers have introduced this episode as the evidence of Seika's passion of learning 'true' Neo-Confucianism as a scholar but the local history of the town where Seika stayed to try to go to China tells a different story about this incident.

According to *Kōyama kyōdoshi* the local history book of Kōyama-cho in Kagoshima prefecture, To do this, Seika stayed at the harbor town in Yamagawa-cho to wait for the ship going to China. However, he gave up this plan after he noticed that Shōryūji a Rinzaï

---

<sup>43</sup> Fujiwara Seika, "Nankō nikki zankan," in *Fujiwara Seika shū*, ed. Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho, vol.2 (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978), 377-88.

Zen temple in that area had Neo-Confucian commentaries of *Analects* that Seika had sought.<sup>44</sup>

These things indicate that Seika maintained his identity as a Zen monk and utilized the network of Zen monasteries after he left the temple. Even Kang Hang remembered Seika as a Zen monk when he met Seika first time.

There was the monk of the Myōjuin, *shuso* Shun [Fujiwara Seika]. He was a descendant of the Kyōgoku *chūngon* Sadaie [Fujiwara no Teika] and the mentor of Akamatsu Hiromichi, the daimyo of Tajima domain. He is brilliant and understands the ancient classics. There is no book he did not read. He has determined character.<sup>45</sup>

Many scholars including Abe have argued that Kang Hang transmitted Neo-Confucianism to Seika. However, the above paragraph implies that Kang Hang already appreciated scholarly quality of Seika as a Neo-Confucian knowledge holder from the beginning. Moreover, Seika with the understanding of Neo-Confucian teaching was still in the Buddhist robe. Boot argues that Kang Hang and Seika became close not because Seika learned Neo-Confucianism from Kang but because they recognized that they shared a common taste to prefer Neo-Confucian scholarship.<sup>46</sup>

Seika had a chance to see Kang Hang because he stayed at Akamatsu Hiromichi's domain with a sponsorship. It is simply said that Seika visited Akamatsu because they were old friends and shared the preference of Confucian scholarship. As a matter of fact,

---

<sup>44</sup> Kōyama Kyōdoshi Hensan Inkai, *Kōyama kyōdoshi* (Koyama: Kōyama Kyōdoshi Hensan Inkai, 1997), 291

<sup>45</sup> Kang Hang, "Kanyangnok," 147.

<sup>46</sup> Boot, "Twegyehak kwa Ilbon," 450.

however, Seika became acquainted with Akamatsu through the Shōkokuji network. The Akamatsu had been one of shogun delegates for the management of Kyoto Gozan since the 15<sup>th</sup> century, and especially involved with the control of Shōkokuji manors.<sup>47</sup> Thanks to this history, the members of the Akamatsu clan and Shōkokuji maintained a good relationship. Seika became familiar with Akamatsu Hiromichi in this way, and Jusen Seika's uncle even sent Hiromichi a letter to express his appreciation for Hiromichi's kindness to be a friend with Seika.<sup>48</sup>

In this regard, the previous scholars' assumption arguing that Seika left Shōkokuji because he established the Neo-Confucian identity does not stand. It is difficult to postulate that Seika converted to Neo-Confucianism for this reason, because there was already a significant gap between the theoretical logic of Buddhism and the actual lives of the Zen monks. By and large, the lived experience of the monkhood was nowhere near as hostile to family relations as the ideals might suggest.

### **Alternative Perspective on Seika's Conversion**

In summary, Seika had an eclectic attitude toward scholarship, and he did not criticize Buddhist philosophy to a significant extent. These accounts imply that we should be careful not to conclude that Seika converted from Zen to Neo-Confucianism simply for philosophical conflicts between two traditions. What then would be an alternative perspective on the Seika's motive of the conversion instead of the conventional one? I would like to suggest that we have to approach this issue from a utilitarian perspective.

---

<sup>47</sup> Takeda Kazuo, *Gozan to chūsei no shakai*, 75.

<sup>48</sup> DNS, pt 31, vol. 12, 619-20, accessed July 28, 2012, DNSSD (020100054170)



As a high-ranked Zen monk, Seika was expected to study Neo-Confucianism, so it was not a matter of being denied access to texts and ideas he wanted to pursue. Similarly, if he had wanted secular success in politics, he could have remained in the Zen institutional frame and enjoyed the advantages that his predecessors already had. However, Seika instead chose a rough, uncharted course by abandoning his position as a Zen monk. Even more, it is said that Seika rejected the offer of a position from Ieyasu. I think these historical facts have driven previous researchers to examine Seika's conversion through the philosophical or metaphysical scope.

Previous scholars believe that Seika declined the offer from Ieyasu because he gave more priority to other values than secular success in politics. Abe Yoshio argues that Seika refused the offer because of the old friendship with the daimyo Akamatsu Hiromichi. He was the patron of Seika, but committed suicide after the alliance led by Ishida Mitsunari (1560-1600) that his military force joined was defeated by Ieyasu's allied force in the battle of Sekigahara. Abe argues that Seika rejected the offer by means of displaying his protest against Ieyasu.<sup>49</sup> Herman Ooms states, "The distance Seika kept from this world was informed by his idealism and reinforced by a disdain for the warrior class that he shared with the old Kyoto elite."<sup>50</sup> Sin Kisu argues that Seika rejected Ieyasu's offer because he abhorred that political power intervened his scholarship.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Abe Yoshio, *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen*, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, 113.

<sup>51</sup> Murakami Tsuneo and Sin Kisu, *Jusha Kang Hang to Nihon*, 129.

Previous scholars describe Fujiwara Seika as a hermit who was simply uninterested in secular success. This is a stereotyped image of intellectuals that we have. Concerning the nature of intellectual, Camus stated that an intellectual as the nation's conscience and the defender of justice,<sup>52</sup> and Mannheim defined the intellectual as a provider of moral criteria to society.<sup>53</sup> He also stated that 'free-floating' intellectuals who do not constitute a single integrated social class or any single political movement should serve to provide society with the criteria of right and wrong.<sup>54</sup> These are ideal models of an intellectual, and previous scholars have also attempted to discover in Seika the image of a prototypical Japanese free-floating intellectual. Shibata Jun introduces Seika's statement of "Sadly, only cunning and deceptive ways are regarded as the wise things for the people's living today. They no longer respect fair and frank people," and he argues that Seika was an ethical thinker who attempted to cure Japanese society hurt by the long-term warfare.<sup>55</sup>

I do not wholly deny the idealistic side of intellectuals. However, in reality many intellectuals had traded their service with actual benefit such as political patronage. They provided politics with the knowledge of philosophy, history, law, and literature to earn economic benefits, and political protection. They merely resemble supply and demand exchanging goods and money in a market. In this regard, Richard Posner disdains so-called "intellectual market" where scholars are selling their knowledge and books to get fame and

---

<sup>52</sup> Camus, "Return to Tipasa," 167-8.

<sup>53</sup> Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: an Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, xlvii.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 250.

<sup>55</sup> Shibata Jun, *Shisōshi ni okeru kinsei*, 187.

benefits as the space to cause intellectual and artistic corruption.<sup>56</sup> This also means that we need to look at both the idealistic and materialistic aspects when we examine the life of an intellectual. Concerning this issue, Ahmad Sadri summarizes Max Weber's opinion as follows.

While, for Weber, intellectuals may comprise a separate stratum or class with its own particular ideal and material interests, the assumption of the relative autonomy of the sphere of ideas prohibits the categorical attribution of an ideological character to all of the thought products of an intellectual stratum. Intellectuals, as producers of ideas and makers of ideologies, both for themselves and other strata and classes, cannot be understood in terms of a monolithic (emanationist or materialistic) theory of knowledge. An emanationist theory would be unable to account for either the ideological dimension of human thought or for its historically determined character.<sup>57</sup>

This perspective also can be applied to the issues of conversion. Historically, some famous converts publicized their reasons for abandoning an old faith and choosing a new one, but frequently this public stance was taken at face value, even if the intellectual in question may have experienced a more complex process or even adopted the public stance as a smokescreen to hide the real motivations driving the conversion. Ulinka Rublack's work, *Reformation Europe* is an outstanding example of contextual research on a famous conversion. Upon the scene of Martin Luther's confrontation with the Roman Catholic

---

<sup>56</sup> Alan Wolfe, *An Intellectual in Public* (Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press, 2003), 368.

<sup>57</sup> Ahmad Sadri, *Max Weber's Sociology of Intellectuals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 58.

when he posted the 95 theses on the door of *Schlosskirche*, many scholars have focused on the change of religious faith in Luther's mind.

In this work, Rublack argues that social networks and the political background around Martin Luther (1483-1546) contributed more to his Protestant activities against Catholicism than did pure religious faith. We usually believe that Luther nailed his ninety-five theses on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg due to his faith to correct the corruption of church and the Reformation was achieved because many people decided to follow Luther's determination. However, Rublack argues that Luther did not expect the Reformation when he posted his theses on the door but other circumstances such as the political calculation of Friedrich III (1463-1525) and support from the academic society of Wittenberg University accelerated the resistance against Church much more than Luther planned<sup>58</sup> This methodology of contextual research would no doubt prove insightful if applied to the case of Seika's conversion. Previous studies of Seika's conversions, however, have focused solely on his philosophical motivations, while neglecting to consider other contextual factors which informed Seika's conversion. In the holistic perspective, we may see the other side of his conversion.

At a glance, Seika seems a free-floating intellectual. However, the historical Seika was not such a type of intellectual. In fact, his life after he left the temple reveals that Seika was an engaged, politically-orientated intellectual. As I already introduced in the above part, Seika had stayed around the political power. He worked for Toyotomi Hidetsugu and had a

---

<sup>58</sup> Ulinka Rublack, *Ulinka Rublack, Reformation Europe, New Approaches to European History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See chapter 2, "Martin Luther's Truth"

trip to give Ieyasu a lecture on the *Essentials of the Government of the Zhenguan Period* after leaving the monastery.

In addition, Seika did not seem to be particularly interested in purely philosophical issues. We do not find him analyzing the *Doctrine of the Mean (Chung-Yung)*, one of the most important Confucian Classics. He did not even spend much time discussing the principle of the cosmos and the human mind based on the concept of the Great Ultimate (*tai-chi*), Principle (*li*), and Material Force (*qi*). Instead, in his essays he displayed a broad but shallow knowledge of several works of Chinese scholarship, including Neo-Confucianist texts, and he mainly dealt with basic concepts when he referred to Neo-Confucianism. For example, in *Kana shōri*, Seika introduced only one Neo-Confucian discourse about the relationship between Heaven and the human mind:

The Way of Heaven is the main body of the universe, and the human mind is a branch of the Way of Heaven.<sup>59</sup>

This phrase refers to the concept of “one principle has diverse reflections”, one of the major logical principles of Zhu Xi, but Seika did not develop this into any deeper metaphysical discussion. Although the essay incorporates in its title the term *seiri* (life principle), the major concept of Neo-Confucianism, the content of the essay itself is far removed from discussions of such sophisticated Neo-Confucian ideas, and is instead little more than a list of simple definitions of basic Confucian terminology. In other words, it was a sort of Confucian terminological dictionary. The first article in the essay consists of the definition of the Way of Heaven, while the last is an explanation of the differences

---

<sup>59</sup> Fujiwara Seika, “Kana shōri,” 401.

among the sage, the wise, and the commoners.<sup>60</sup> These terms are all basic concepts which had already been extensively discussed by the Classical Confucianists; moreover, Seika never introduced any advanced Neo-Confucian elements in this essay.

Seika may be respected as the founding father of Japanese Neo-Confucianism, but his philosophy fails to attract much interest from scholars because he did not attempt to reach a particularly sophisticated level of Neo-Confucianism. Among Seika's essays, only a few such as *Kana shōri* and *Daigaku yōryaku* deal with even basic concepts of Neo-Confucian philosophy.

Seen from this perspective, Seika's pursuit of Neo-Confucian studies was not that different from that of previous Zen monks, who were not driven primarily by philosophical motivations in following Neo-Confucianism. Seika's eclectic approach was not a unique methodology devised by him alone, but rather a general trend in Zen monastery scholarship. Moreover, as discussed earlier, he did not even criticize Buddhist philosophy to any significant extent. This is not to say that Seika was ignorant of Neo-Confucian or Buddhist philosophy. However, I argue that Seika's philosophical consciousness ultimately had little effect on his decision to become a full-time Neo-Confucianist rather than a typical Zen monk with Neo-Confucian knowledge.

Previous scholars almost automatically approach issues associated with Neo-Confucianism in Japan through the philosophy-centric lens because they are simply overwhelmed by the ideological character of Neo-Confucianism in other East Asian countries, such as China and Korea. This therefore reveals the limits in our tendency to

---

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 399, 412.

instinctively conceive of conversion as a spiritual shift from one metaphysical tradition to another. This conception has dissuaded scholars from approaching Seika's conversion from the perspective of practical purposes. However, we can more clearly see the motivation behind Seika's conversion if we enlarge our vision to take in the socio-intellectual context.

### Chapter 3: Conversion as Marketing

#### Professional, Not Philosophical

Is a Neo-Confucianist necessarily a Neo-Confucian philosopher? Just as most Christians—even most Christian clergy—are not “Christian philosophers,” few of even the most committed, professional Neo-Confucianists were not “philosophers” in any sense of the term. Scholars who have enough knowledge of Neo-Confucianism and earn certain benefits from this knowledge can proclaim themselves Neo-Confucianists even if they do not follow Neo-Confucian lessons as their philosophical or ethical code. Unlike contemporary Ming and Qing China or Chosŏn Korea, where scholar-bureaucrats with Neo-Confucian learning traditionally dominated both the political and the academic sphere, Japan initially adopted Neo-Confucianism as a source of practical knowledge that provided examples from Chinese history, politics, and literature. The socio-political expectation of Neo-Confucian scholars in Japan was not philosophical insight so much as pragmatic know-how.

We can see a similar case in European history. What first comes to mind when one thinks about “the Renaissance?” Andrew Graham-Dixon defines the Renaissance as “the word coined to express their thrilling fantasy of a rebirth, of a return to the first bright dawn of civilization.”<sup>1</sup> What then does one think of humanism and humanists, the intellectuals who lived in the time of Renaissance? Since the term includes the particle of “ism,” humanism is sometimes assumed to be a sort of philosophy. Graham-Dixon argues that

---

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Graham-Dixon, *Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 12.



humanism did not have an obvious philosophical stance comparable to, say, logical positivism or existentialism, but it had philosophical implications that drove humanists to certain ways of thinking.<sup>2</sup> However, the relationship between humanism and humanists was not that simple. Donald J. Wilcox explains the complexity of humanism and humanists as follows.

The dramatic growth of humanism in Italy raises a number of questions. What did the movement offer that proved so satisfying? What fresh perspectives did it bring to the personal experience not only of scholars but also of the statesmen and businessmen who supported and utilized it? What new values did it offer to the fifteenth century? Even the name of the movement presents problems. Today it is called humanism, but that term was devised only in the early nineteenth century to distinguish a type of classical education from the new scientific curriculum then being introduced. Men of the Renaissance referred to the movement most often as the *studia humanitatis*, the study of the humanities, but even this denoted more precisely the curriculum than the values that lay behind it.

The difficulties of describing and interpreting humanism are inherent in the nature of the movement. It was not a school of systematic thought but a loose association of men with common attitudes who contributed to a variety of activities. Primarily concerned with education and scholarship, the humanists eventually found

---

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

themselves involved in politics, literature, law, and even philosophy and theology. No single perspective can fully illumine a movement of this variety and complexity.<sup>3</sup>

In this regard, James Hankins argues, “Unlike modern political scientist or medieval scholastic philosophers, Renaissance humanists were not occupied with political theory as such. Professionally, humanists acted as teachers, diplomats, political propagandists, courtiers and bureaucrats.”<sup>4</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller also asserts that humanists in Renaissance were, in spite of their name, professional successors of *dictators*, professional rhetoricians during the Middle Ages.<sup>5</sup>

I see the shape of Seika’s conversion from the a perspective informed by the case of the Renaissance humanists. At a glance, Seika’s conversion looks like a simple transition from one tradition to another: from Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. However, his attitude toward Buddhism and his moves outside the temple, as discussed above, clearly reveal that he did not convert to Neo-Confucianism out of anti-Buddhist sentiment. I think that it is necessary to break down Seika’s conversion into two different stages to explore the motives of Seika’s conversion: the stages of institutional transition (a conversion from one

---

<sup>3</sup> Donald J. Wilcox, *In Search of God & Self: Renaissance and Reformation Thought* (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1987), 74-5.

<sup>4</sup> James Hankins, “Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, ed. Jill Kraye (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 118.

<sup>5</sup> Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1961), 3-23.

community to another, when both are within the same major tradition<sup>6</sup>) and tradition transition.

In fact, the first stage of Seika's conversion follows the pattern of institutional transition. More precisely, the initial character of Seika's conversion was not a shift from Zen monk to Neo-Confucian philosopher, but from Zen scholar-monk to an independent scholar who has the nature of a non-monastery-based intellectual. At this stage, he left the temple to be an independent scholar but maintained his identity as a Zen monk. His shift of to professed Neo-Confucianist, which announced his conversion as a tradition transition, appeared much later. I argue that the institution transition was the actual nature of Seika's conversion and the transition tradition was a sort of method of justification or marketing for his career as a Neo-Confucian scholar, a non-monastery-based intellectual.

Although there are several opinions about the question of when Seika converted to Neo-Confucianism, many scholars identify Seika's departure from the temple in 1591 as the starting line of his conversion. Thus, it is necessary for us to examine the reason for his departure from the temple to explore the entire picture of Seika's motives for conversion.

To do this, let me first summarize the socio-political background of Shōkokuji. Since the Kamakura period, Rinzai Zen Buddhism had served as the major religious and intellectual partner for the shogunate, and in fact Neo-Confucianism enabled this. In 1195, Eisai, a Zen monk who had recently returned from his second tour of study in SongChina, proclaimed the Japanese Rinzai sect in his "Promote Zen to Protect the State" (*Kōzen*

---

<sup>6</sup> Dialogue Ireland, "Interview: Lewis R. Rambo."

<http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/resources/dciarchive/zinterviewrambo.html> (Accessed 4 July 2011)

*gokoku-ron*), and insisted that the institutionally and politically dominant Tendai school could be revitalized only by adopting the new Zen teaching. Eisai's efforts were fiercely opposed by the Tendai clergy, and as a result the Tendai sect and the imperial court formally prohibited Eisai from proselytizing.<sup>7</sup> Tendai had long enjoyed a close relationship with politics, and Zen Buddhism which challenged the established political authority of the old schools inevitably had face the suppression and had to seek an outlet in the political realm.

The political impotence of Zen Buddhism was not to last. The sect experienced a major turning point after gaining sponsorship from the Kamakura shogunate. Albert Welter argues that the leaders of Kamakura Japan were attracted to Zen Buddhism because the rituals of Zen Buddhism served the communal needs of the entire Kamakura society as well as the religious enlightenment of individual members of the populace, and that Zen monasteries were holistic places which provided Kamakura Japan with a framework for moral and social order.<sup>8</sup>

However, I believe that more utilitarian factors contributed to the rise of Zen Buddhism during the Kamakura period. It is true that Zen Buddhism flourished during the Kamakura period, but this does not mean that the traditional sects, which had maintained political influence since the Nara period, lost their power. Rather, they demonstrated continued political participation and influence. Kuroda Toshio asserts that the dominant

---

<sup>7</sup> Aishin Imaeda, "Rinzai Sect," in *A History of Japanese Religion*, ed. Kazuo Kasahara (Tokyo: Kosei, 2004), 229.

<sup>8</sup> Albert Welter, *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 113-39.

Buddhist tradition of medieval Japan was the old schools of Buddhism, i.e., Tendai and Shingon, rather than the New Buddhism. Additionally, he argues that the Kamakura shogunate supported the old schools as well as Zen Buddhism because the shogunate was fascinated by the *ōbō-buppō* (imperial law and Buddhist law) ideology provided by the old Schools.<sup>9</sup>

Later shogunates also inherited this convention. For instance, in 1347, the Muromachi shogunate specially requested the *Tendai zasu*, the abbot of Hieizan Enryakuji, headquarters of the Tendai sect, to pray for their victory at the battle of Kii, when the first Ashikaga shogun, Takauji (1305-1358), defeated the armies of the southern court.<sup>10</sup> Then what really urged Kamakura Japan to work with Zen Buddhism? On this issue, Martin Collcutt provides a useful argument. Collcutt suggests that the Rinzai sect was welcomed by the Kamakura shogunate for two reasons, Rinzai prelates' knowledge of Chinese studies, on the one hand, and the shogunate's need for a new religion to undercut the excessive power of the older Buddhist schools, on the other. In fact, few samurai in the shogunate actually understood Zen, or were committed to Zen practice at the time, but they were fascinated by Rinzai's rich knowledge of Chinese culture and rituals.<sup>11</sup>

The Kamakura shogunate wielded real political power, but was beset with a sense of cultural inferiority vis-à-vis Kyoto, where the imperial court and noble class enjoyed a flourishing culture. Famously, Minamoto no Sanetomo (1192-1219), the third shogun,

---

<sup>9</sup> Toshio Kuroda, "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996), 274.

<sup>10</sup> DNS, pt.10, vol. 6, 828, accessed December 24, 2011, DNSSD (020100091299)

<sup>11</sup> Collcutt, *Five Mountains*, 294.

particularly envied the literary culture of Kyoto, and tried to lure Hakase-ke scholars to Kamakura.<sup>12</sup> Genjō Masayoshi also argues that consuming Kyoto culture was an important way for Kamakura shoguns to display their status.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, the Kamakura shogunate needed some kind of intellectual assistance as long as it was an actual political organization requiring elements of religion, law and record-keeping. The problem was where to find the necessary intellectual manpower. Specifically, the Kamakura shogunate, being a relatively remote locale far from the glittering court of Kyoto, had geographical as well as networking issues in hiring intellectuals. Most intellectuals with humanistic knowledge were members of the old-school Buddhism or the nobility, both based in Kyoto, while the shogunate was located in Kamakura, three-hundred-fifty kilometers to the east. Some Kyoto-based intellectuals even were involved in political tensions with the shogunate, and were rarely motivated to work for the shogunate. Without question, it was difficult to recruit intellectuals. In this regard, when Eisai, and Rinzai Zen institutions more broadly, sought political patronage outside Kyoto, it presented itself to Kamakura as the perfect partner to fulfill the needs of the shogunate.

This implies that there had been a sort of virtual market trading knowledge services and political patronage between intellectuals and political elites. Zen Buddhism played a significant role in this market as a supplier. Shōkokuji was established by the Muromachi shogunate in 1383, and enjoyed special political patronage. This close relationship with the

---

<sup>12</sup> Wajima Yoshio, *Chūsei no Jugaku*, 62.

<sup>13</sup> Genjō Masayoshi, “Chihō bushi no bungei kyōju: bunka to keizai no kōkan,” in *Kuge to buke - sono hikaku bunmeisi-teki kōsatsu*, ed. Murai Yasuhiko (Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1995), 161.

shogunate had long contributed to the secular prosperity of the monastery. Conversely, when the Muromachi shogunate saw its political power crumble, the influence of Shōkokuji was dramatically reduced.<sup>14</sup> During the Ōnin War (1467-1477), anti-shogunate forces targeted Shōkokuji as a major stronghold of the shogunate, and burnt down the large part of the temple buildings. After the war, the temple remained in ruins for a long time because the shogunate could not afford to rebuild it. The monastic population was also reduced in this period as well.<sup>15</sup>

This hard situation for Shōkokuji was accelerated during the Sengoku period (1467-1573). The centralized authority represented by the shogunate essentially ceased to exist. Any local warlord could entertain dreams of grasping hegemony over Japan, and this produced an intense and diverse political geography. It was necessary for the temple to adapt itself to the new political circumstances. Although the temple had lost much of its political influence after the Ōnin War, it still maintained the fame of an elite intellectual institute. However, this status was challenged by the monks from non-Gozan temples such as Daitokuji and Myōshinji, who earned the patronage of newly emerging warlords.<sup>16</sup> That is to say, Shōkokuji faced the rise of rivals in the intellectual market.

Shōkokuji monks had to be aggressive in their efforts to build connections with the political world beside the shogunate and pursued differing political interests and networks.

---

<sup>14</sup> Collcutt, 91.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>16</sup> Collcutt, 91.

This was not only about forming a dynamic force to bolster the political influence of the temple but also the secular success of individual monks.

Seika, who had been *shuso* (the leader of monks practicing asceticism) of Shōkokuji, was in the middle of this situation. In Shōkokuji, there was *Inryōken* a small subsidiary temple and the head of this hermitage was called *Inryōshiki*. This was a quite significant position which had the power to supervise the administrative affairs of Shōkokuji and assisted the *sōroku*<sup>17</sup> who was in charge of the overall governance of the Gozan and the Rinzai school.<sup>18</sup> Jusen had served in the position of *Inryōken* for 7 years from 1583 to 1590. Seika was promoted to *shuso* during that period and happened to leave the temple in 1591 the year after his uncle Jusen retired from the position of *Inryōshiki*.

Jusen was a prominent monk, and the hierarch of Shōkokuji. At the same time, Jusen had a rival in the temple as well, Seishō Jōtai. Jusen and Jōtai had different political networks. While Jōtai had served Hideyoshi and Ieyasu, two arriviste military powers, Jusen networks, and his allegiances, centered on the traditional court nobility, men like Konoe Nobutada (1565-1614), who had clashed with the Toyotomi clan over the issue of Hideyoshi's appointment to the position of regent (*kanpaku*), a post that had been monopolized for seven centuries by scions of the noble Fujiwara lineage—like Nobutada.<sup>19</sup> These contrasting political networks created different fates for Jusen and Jōtai.

---

<sup>17</sup> Shōkokuji had initiative in the appointment of *sōroku*, but there were several *sōroku* who were not Shōkokuji monks.

<sup>18</sup> Takeda Kazuo, *Gozan to chūsei no shakai*, 7.

<sup>19</sup> *Shimazu-ke monjo*, DNK, vol 16, 293, accessed October 3, 2011, KFTD, <http://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/IMG/850/8500/05/1601/0249.tif>



The power dynamics of the temple rapidly inclined toward Jōtai as he personally constructed a stronger relationship with Hideyoshi. Jōtai was in charge of building the Toyotomi clan temple in Fushimi.<sup>20</sup> Hideyoshi assigned Jōtai to deal with diplomatic documents exchanged with Ming China and Chosŏn Korea before his Korean campaigns.<sup>21</sup> We can assume that, in this process, Jōtai grasped the initiative both in the Shōkokuji community and in the broader intellectual market, while the influence of Jusen declined at the same time. This context offers considerably more insight into Seika's position at the temple. Seika was in Jusen's network, since he was Jusen's nephew, and his influence would be affected by the decline of Jusen's power.

In 1591, Seika suddenly left the temple. Even more, Jusen sent a letter to Seika to officially break their relationship in three years later,<sup>22</sup> though it is unclear what the source of their conflict was. Ōta Seikyū argues that Seika's pro-Confucian stance made his uncle uncomfortable.<sup>23</sup> While Inoguchi argues that Jusen sent the letter to Seika out of anger at for Seika's claim to abandon Shōkokuji affiliation.<sup>24</sup> However, Seika's moves after moving out of the temple call both Ōta's and Inoguchi's arguments into question. Seika left the

---

<sup>20</sup> SS, pt. 913, vol. 11, 63, accessed October 3, 2011, DNSSD (020100222139)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 122, accessed October 3, 2011, DNSSD (020100222785)

<sup>22</sup> Inoguchi Atsushi and Matano Tarō, *Fujiwara Seika Matsunaga Sekigo* (Tokyo: Meitoku Shuppan, 1982), 72-3.

<sup>23</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika*, 25.

<sup>24</sup> Inoguchi Atsushi and Matano Tarō, 73.

temple in 1591 but still introduced himself as *shuso* of Shōkokuji even when he first met Kang Hang in 1598, four year after he received the letter from Jusen.<sup>25</sup>

High-ranked Shōkokuji monks were often hired as official *literati* of the shogunate. Seika was successfully promoted to a higher position that made him eligible to be hired in just such a capacity, but he left the temple nonetheless. Some scholars have been quick to argue that Seika was a lofty, idealistic philosopher free from secular ambitions. However, we also saw earlier that this was clearly not the case: Seika followed a career intertwined with the political authorities after he left the temple, just as other Rinzai Zen monks did. In a sense, Seika's departure from Shōkokuji was the contradictory action. Therefore, I infer that Seika did *not* choose to leave the temple voluntarily, but rather, was forced to do so, and that escaping from Jusen's political network with the nobility was one of the reasons that Seika had to leave the temple.

Seika, unlike his uncle, tried to construct a relationship with both the Toyotomi clan and Tokugawa Ieyasu after he left the temple. I believe that Seika found himself allied in a factional struggle with individuals opposed to those allied with his uncle, this difficult political division resulted in the conflict between them.

In Seika's time, the major intellectual commodity was *kangaku* (Chinese studies) based on Neo-Confucian commentaries, which had long been monopolized by Zen monks. The renunciation of the position of Zen monk would therefore cause considerable troubles for an intellectual seeking to survive in the intellectual market of the day. As long as Seika attempted to make a living by his knowledge of *kangaku*, he would necessarily have had to

---

<sup>25</sup> Kang Hang, "Kanyangnok," 148.

compete with scholar-monks from several Rinzai Zen monasteries. Such scholar-monks had a long tradition and firm networks in Neo-Confucian studies, while Seika, now having been stripped of his institutional roots in the monastery, needed to start afresh.

Unfortunately, this meant that he suffered from a lack of both precedent and institutional framework for an independent Neo-Confucian scholar outside of Zen monasteries. This situation also sheds light on his above-mentioned expression of antagonism, not towards Buddhism per se, but towards Zen monks: far from reflecting a philosophical position, his criticism may have emerged from bitter experience, reflecting his psychological state of mind in struggling against Zen monks for survival.

To survive in competition with the established scholar-monks, Seika desperately needed to prove that his mastery of Sinological and Confucian scholarship was superior to theirs, but this was no easy task because Japanese intellectual society lacked objective systems to evaluate the quality of scholarship on par with a civil service examination in China or Korea. Reputation and peer evaluation were the most significant tools an intellectual had to draw on, but neither was easy for Seika since the Zen monkhood had already established a solid position in the intellectual market. They monopolized both the access to the Neo-Confucian texts and the network to distribute intellectual commodities to buyers.

Outside the temple, Seika took advantage of the old network he had built in the temple as much as possible, but it was fundamentally necessary for Seika to employ a novel strategy to overcome the situation. He found the answer to this from the emphasis on professionalism. As a matter of fact, this approach was to bring a novel, yet familiar, marketing strategy into play.

In 1381, former regent Nijō Yoshimoto (1320-1388) asked a question of the prominent Rinzai monk Gidō Shūshin (1325-1388), renowned for his literary talents, concerning the nature of the difference between Neo-Confucianism and the Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period in interpreting the Confucian Classics. In response, Shūshin answered that Neo-Confucian commentaries on the Classics were sophisticated and lofty in their handling of the principles of the universe and human nature, while the Hakase-ke's scholarship only focused on the specific but insignificant meaning of words.<sup>26</sup> Shūshin also recommended to the third Ashikaga shogun, Yoshimitsu (1357-1408) that he study Neo-Confucian texts, and personally delivered lectures to him on the *Doctrine of the Mean*.<sup>27</sup>

Confucianism had not occupied the dominant position in medieval Japan, but Confucian scholarship had long served as a valuable cultural asset for Rinzai monks seeking to obtain socio-political influence. Despite the fact that Japan lacked the tradition of a civil service examination system, which in other East Asian countries had served as a device to connect Confucian scholarship to individuals' ambition for political success. However, as Rinzai institutions established themselves in Kyoto, they realized possibility of the competition with another intellectual group there for the hegemony of Confucian studies. It was the rivalry with Hakase-ke.

Rinzai Zen monks and the Hakase-ke members rarely had a chance to directly collide with each other because their territories were different. The Hakase-ke were mainly involved with the nobility and the imperial court while Zen monasteries had a partnership

---

<sup>26</sup> Ichikawa Mototarō, *Nihon Jukyō-shi*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992), 246.

<sup>27</sup> George Sansom, *A History of Japan to 1334* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 161-66.

with the shogunate. However, the Hakase-ke were virtually the only scholarly opponent that Zen monks could compare themselves to. Here too Rinzai faced opposition, not from the old schools of Buddhism, but rather from the Hakase-ke scholar clans. Having fascinated Japanese society with its intellectual aptitude and gained prestige as a result, Zen Buddhism needed to prove its scholarly quality to maintain its political sponsorship. Zen monks involved with Neo-Confucianism were already aware of this, and were confident that Neo-Confucian scholarship was superior to Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang period to which Hakase-ke scholars had been committed.

This also shows that the rivalry between Hakase-ke and Zen monks lay in the contest between Exegetical Studies of the Han-Tang Period and Neo-Confucianism, rather than Confucianism versus Buddhism. Shūshin compared Neo-Confucian commentaries with the Hakase-ke's to argue that Neo-Confucian commentaries were more sophisticated and lofty than the Hakase-ke's counterpart. I doubt that the samurai in the Muromachi shogunate, from the shogun on down, had enough academic preparation to judge which Confucian scholarship was superior. Shūshin merely suggested this to locate their scholarship over the position of the counterpart of Hakase-ke, not out of respect for Neo-Confucian teachings. That is to say, his goal was to establish that Zen monks were more professional than the Hakase-ke scholars in the interpretation of the Confucian texts.

Seika's moves after leaving Shōkokuji were steps in the process of professionalizing his scholarship to advertise the superior quality of his scholarship over that of the Zen monks. Just as the Zen monks had claimed that they were better at interpreting the Confucian Classics than the Hakase-ke scholars, Seika's professionalization was a move to position himself as preferable to the Zen clerics. In terms of scholarly reputation, Seika had

already staked out a good position in the intellectual market thanks both to his former position of *shuso* in Shōkokuji, and his family background as a descendent of Fujiwara no Teika, but he needed more than that to succeed against the powerful cartel of by the Zen monks. In short, he needed an “edge” over the competition. The last step of his conversion as a tradition transition occurred at this stage.

First of all, Seika found this edge by paying attention to what Zen monks could not have: the authenticity of Neo-Confucian scholarship. While other Zen monks had studied Neo-Confucianism in the circle of the monastery scholarship, Seika tried to improve the quality of his understanding of the Confucian texts through foreign contacts--such as his attempt to travel to China and his cooperation with Kang Hang. Seika even had a plan to travel Chosŏn, a plan he had to cancel when Hideyoshi’s armies invaded Korea.<sup>28</sup> Previous scholars such as Abe Yoshio believe that these moves reveal how much Seika respected and how eager he was to study Neo-Confucianism in countries where Neo-Confucian scholarship was more advanced.<sup>29</sup>

It is true that Seika wanted to learn Neo-Confucianism from China or Korea, however what Seika most wanted to learn through foreign contacts was accurate interpretations of the classics, rather than pure Neo-Confucian philosophy. Seika gave up his plan to go to China after he found the Neo-Confucian commentaries on the *Analects* at a temple in

---

<sup>28</sup> Kang Hang, “Kanyangnok,” 149.

<sup>29</sup> Abe Yoshio, 60-61.

Kyushu.<sup>30</sup> He suggested that he and Kang Hang work together to revise the Japanese commentaries on the Four Books and Five Canons.

Japanese intellectuals were aware that Neo-Confucianism was the scholarly mainstream elsewhere in the East Asian world, and for them China or Korea could be the sort of brand name of the authentic, advanced scholarship of Neo-Confucianism. Seika tried to add authentic and advanced elements to his scholarship through the foreign contacts.

Second, Seika also tried to gain an edge for his Neo-Confucian scholarship by visualizing Confucian institutions and practices. Japanese intellectual society conceived of Neo-Confucianism only as a source of commentary on the Confucian classics, but had few ideas about the visible and tangible shape of Confucian institutions such as Confucian rituals, Confucian shrines, and the appropriate appearance—clothing, headgear, hairstyles, etc.—of a Confucian scholar. Seika, however, had gained a direct route to this information, through Kang Hang, who taught him the processes of rituals for Confucius, the structure of Confucian shrines, and the design of Confucian dress. Kang Hang recalled,

He asked me about the process of the civil service examinations, *sŏkchŏn* [J., *sekiten*, the Grand Ritual for Confucius] in spring and fall, and *kyŏngyŏn* [J., *keien*, the Confucian lectures and discussions before the King]. I told him that I did not know details and taught simple outlines.<sup>31</sup>

Most modern Korean scholars believe that it was Kang Hang who introduced Neo-Confucianism to Fujiwara Seika, who in turn transmitted it to Hayashi Razan and others;

---

<sup>30</sup> Kōyama Kyōdoshi Hensan Inkai, *Kōyama kyōdoshi*, 291.

<sup>31</sup> Kang Hang, “Kanyangnok,” 148.

but Seika had already acquired a plentiful knowledge of Neo-Confucianism before he met Kang Hang. In addition, Seika had only a few months with Kang Hang,<sup>32</sup> and thus it is difficult to say that Kang Hang transmitted the Neo-Confucian teachings to Seika, inspiring Seika to convert to Neo-Confucianism. However, we can certainly say that Kang Hang in fact transmitted the exterior formats and elements of Confucian appearance. It is known, for example, that Seika wore Korean-style Confucian dress when he gave lectures to elite samurai or had debates with Zen monks. This appears to have been a strategy by Seika to differentiate himself from his Zen competition.

Pierre Bourdieu argues that symbolic devices such as robes and ritual expressions accompanied with formal and official occasions endow them with power.<sup>33</sup> Seika's attempt to visualize Confucian institutions, that is, also worked as empowering mechanisms, in Bourdieu's sense. Seika's new appearance as a "Neo-Confucianist" changed the conventional contemporary assumption among the emerging elite—Tokugawa Ieyasu, in particular—that Neo-Confucian experts in Japan were simply monks with a bit of specialized knowledge. He created a distinctly Confucian appearance that had not previously existed in Japan, and this helped reinforce the idea of a separate identity, encouraging Japanese to regard Neo-Confucianists as an independent profession separate from Zen Buddhism.

Similarly, Seika's actual identity was more that of a possessor of Neo-Confucian knowledge than of a philosopher, and his conversion from Zen Buddhism to Neo-

---

<sup>32</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 21.

<sup>33</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Language & Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 75.



Confucianism was rather a professional conversion than a religious one. However, he needed a new appearance to distinguish himself from Zen monks, and thus he adopted the external trappings of a Neo-Confucianist.

Seika thus claimed his identity as a Neo-Confucianist to differentiate himself from Zen monks with Neo-Confucian knowledge, and to display himself as a more professional Neo-Confucian knowledge holder. In this regard, his conversion was a tactic for power positioning over the Zen monk scholars, reinforcing his position in the intellectual market for Chinese studies. I therefore argue that the second stage of Seika's conversion as a tradition transition was a form of marketing for his new career as non-monastery-based intellectual.

It seems that his marketing was successful. In the Japanese intellectual market, limited privileged groups such as the Hakase-ke and Rinzai monks had long monopolized access to Sinological and Confucian scholarship and had dominated the market. Therefore, it was quite hard for a newcomer like Seika to survive the competition. However, Seika established his own academy in Kyoto where he trained several students who emerged as prominent Confucianists in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many of them were commoners with no prestigious affiliations. For instance, Kan Tokuan (1581-1628) and Hori Kyōan (1585-1643) came from physician families; Naba Kassho (1591-1648) from a rich peasant family; and Yoshida Soan (1554-1614) was a rich merchant.

In the ensuing decades, private Confucian academies contributed to the expansion of the reading population.<sup>34</sup> Of course, Confucian academies were relatively rare in the first

---

<sup>34</sup> Richard Rubinger, *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007), 85.

half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century; thus, it is hard to say that the expansion of reading population in the early modern Japan was wholly owing to the Confucian academies. However, these academies played an increasingly important role in creating advanced readers, even among the commoners, who could approach Neo-Confucian scholarship on a serious level.

### **Tactical Anti-Buddhism**

There is another significant figure that we cannot overlook when we talk about conversion from Zen to Neo-Confucianism as a utilitarian movement, Hayashi Razan. Razan identified himself as a Neo-Confucian convert and actively and aggressively utilized this conversion to market for his scholarship.

Razan was born to a Kyoto merchant family in 1583 and later adopted by his uncle who ran a rice business. He was expected to succeed in his foster father's family business, but instead at the age of 12 entered Kenninji, another major Rinzai Zen monastery in the Kyoto Gozan system. While Razan appears to have entered the institution as a novice to learn Chinese studies, more than out of any Buddhist calling, he had already displayed a special acumen for such studies before he arrived. It is said that he was able to read and write classical Chinese by the time he was ten or eleven. Recognizing Razan's abilities, the Zen monks of Kenninji asked him to become a regular monk, but he refused this offer and left the temple when he turned fifteen years old. There is even an anecdote recounting how the monks in Kenninji went so far as to request Maeda Gen'i (1539-1602), Hideyoshi's chief administrator for the city of Kyoto, to persuade Razan to return to the monastery, but Razan did not listen to him.<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Hayashi Razan nenpukō* (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1999), 13.

For his part, Razan stated that he did not want to be a monk because Buddhism would have forced him to abandon family relationships. Thus, scholars believe that Razan must have faced a similar intellectual crisis to Seika's, in the collision of Neo-Confucian ethics and Buddhist creed. Hori Isao takes the following quote as an example of Razan's basic criticism against Buddhism.

Why do I have to abandon my parents' grace to obey Shakyamuni? If I should not have descendants as Buddhist monks do, it would be unfilial to my parents. Thus, I will not follow Buddhism.<sup>36</sup>

In this passage, Razan criticized Buddhist teachings which did not recognize family bonds, and he also argued that Buddhism destroyed human relationships.<sup>37</sup> This seems similar to the logic observed in the account concerning Seika's criticism. As a matter of fact, it was Razan who created an anti-Buddhist image for Seika. In the previous chapter, we have discussed that Seika was not an anti-Buddhist scholar, though many scholars have attempted to find the motive of Seika's conversion from the lens of anti-Buddhism.

There are two factors which drove scholars to the view that Seika must have been an anti-Buddhist. First, Neo-Confucianism has a well-deserved image as fundamentally anti-Buddhist. We are reminded of two images when we hear the term of Neo-Confucianist: a metaphysical philosopher, and an anti-Buddhist. These images arise from the historical experience that many Neo-Confucian scholars in both China and Korea had for centuries discussed philosophical issues from an anti-Buddhist stance. Therefore, scholars

---

<sup>36</sup> Hori Isao, *Hayashi Razan* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964), 23.

<sup>37</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1979), 56.

instinctively use these images as a universal criterion to define a Neo-Confucianist, and also apply this truism to understand what motivated Seika's conversion from Zen to Neo-Confucianism. This universal criterion works when we discuss Neo-Confucianists in China and Korea because they studied Neo-Confucianism as state orthodoxy which affected their rituals, ethics, and the directions of scholarship.<sup>38</sup> However, this universality of a Neo-Confucianist does not work when it comes to the issues of Neo-Confucianists in Japan because Japanese Neo-Confucianists adopted Neo-Confucianism in local situations that were fundamentally different from either China or Korea.

The second factor is the *Gyōjō*, Razan's version of Seika's biography. Most of the harsh criticisms of Buddhism attributed to Seika are taken from the *Gyōjō*, which also suggests explicitly that Seika's conversion was motivated by anti-Buddhist sentiment. Previous studies base their conclusion on this argument. Razan was the other early Neo-Confucian pioneer who established the connection between Neo-Confucianism and shogunal politics and is also believed to be one of Seika's disciples. Moreover, Razan's version of Seika's biography was included as a section in Seika's collected works. Because of this personal background, Razan's descriptions about Seika have been accepted as orthodox and the most reliable source.

Razan's description of Seika is has been seen as plausible because it matches the stereotyped image of the Neo-Confucianist as anti-Buddhist metaphysic philosopher derived from the characteristics of typical Neo-Confucianists in China and Korea. However,

---

<sup>38</sup> On the anti-Buddhist bias of early Chosŏn Neo-Confucianists, see Martina Deuchler, *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1995), 23-27.

it contains a number of problems. Most of all, Razan's version of Seika's biography seems to distort some aspects of Seika as an outstanding anti-Buddhist Neo-Confucian philosopher.

It is hard to believe that Razan misunderstood Seika's philosophical tendency because Razan had a close relationship with Seika. It was Seika who gave the pen name "Razan" to Hayashi Dōshun.<sup>39</sup> He discussed Confucian issues in his letters to Razan and also recommended Razan to Ieyasu for recruitment as an official scholar. Therefore, Razan must have known that Seika was not a harsh criticism of Buddhism.

Razan should have also known that Seika had eclectic ways to understand Neo-Confucian teachings. For instance, Razan discussed the "investigation of things" (J., *kakubutsu*) and obtaining perfect knowledge and claimed that the Cheng brothers' and Zhu Xi's interpretation of this notion were brilliant and clear while Wang Yangming's ideas were in error. Razan expected that Seika would agree with his criticism of Wang Yangming but Seika pointed that Razan's exclusion of Wang's ideas was a hasty choice.<sup>40</sup> Razan had confined the range of Neo-Confucianism to the teachings of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi, the so-called the orthodox lineage of the Way in Neo-Confucianism. However, Seika extended the category of Neo-Confucianism to the territory of Wang Yangming's Learning of the Mind (J., *Shingaku*; Ch. *Xinxue*). In this sense, we can be quite confident that Razan was fully aware that Seika was neither a harsh anti-Buddhist nor an exclusive Neo-Confucian fundamentalist.

---

<sup>39</sup> Hara Nensai, *Sentetsu sōdan*, 1: 37.

<sup>40</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 130

This raises the question of why Razan described Seika as a typical anti-Buddhist. Quentin Skinner argues that the author's intention in writing can be explained by reconstructing the conventions and situations surrounding a text.<sup>41</sup> Paul Ricœur, a French philosopher, suggests, "Every narrative combines two dimensions in various proportions, one chronological and the other nonchronological. The first may be called the episodic dimension, which characterizes the story made out of events. The second is the configurational dimension, according to which the plot construes significant wholes out of scattered event."<sup>42</sup> Based on Ricœur's statement, Hayden White adds, "In telling a story, the historian necessarily reveals a plot."<sup>43</sup> From this perspective, we have to consider Seika's biography as having a specific plot for serving Razan's intention.

Previous research implies that Razan chose to portray Seika as an anti-Buddhist because he himself had a strong anti-Buddhist stance and intended to spread the influence of Neo-Confucianism in Japan. Abe states that Razan criticized Buddhism to shift the attention of the populace from seeking salvation in the afterlife (Buddhism) to this-worldly concerns (Confucianism). He also argues that this shift was a change from a medieval mind dependent on religion to a realistic, rational one.<sup>44</sup> Imanaka Kanji argues that Razan had kept an anti-Buddhist stance to spread Neo-Confucian lessons against Buddhism's intellectual dominance in the shogunate and the exaggeration of Seika's image as an anti-

---

<sup>41</sup> Skinner, "A Reply to My Critics," 267-68.

<sup>42</sup> Hayden White, *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 51.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>44</sup> Abe Yoshio, *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen*, 158.

Buddhist resulted from this atmosphere.<sup>45</sup> In addition, Joseph Spae argues that Razan improved upon Seika's anti-Buddhist arguments but had stricter perspective on Buddhism because he had a fundamentalist attitude following Zhu Xi's line of interpretation. He also adds that Razan was the first Japanese to champion Mencius' criticism of Yang Zhu (370? - 319?) and Mo Di (450? - 390?) as the outstanding example of orthodoxy's attitude towards heresy, and adopted Cheng Mingdao's position that Buddhism was more dangerous than the philosophy of Yang and Mo.<sup>46</sup> Other scholars share this view of Razan. Sagara Tōru argues that Razan even criticized even Lu Xiangshan (1139-1192) to champion only Zhu Xi.<sup>47</sup>

I agree with these arguments to some extent. In terms of understanding the *Great Learning*, Razan followed exactly Zhu Xi's theory in interpreting the *Great Learning's* concept of "bright virtue" (Ch., *mingde*; J., *meitoku*), while Seika mixed theories of both Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming on the same issue. Razan stated that achieving all Confucian values depend on the consistency of the human mind, and that keeping the human mind clear refers to manifesting the bright virtue.<sup>48</sup> Seika approached this issue from the perspective of ethics because he considered bright virtue a human relationship, while Razan handled this concept through the lens of epistemology since he regarded each element of Confucian values as elements of human consciousness. It is true that Razan had a different

---

<sup>45</sup> Imanaka Kanji, *Kinsei Nihon seiji shisōshi no seiritsu*, 140-42.

<sup>46</sup> Spae, "Buddhism as Viewed by Two Tokugawa Confucianists;" 168-69.

<sup>47</sup> Sagara Tōru, *Nihon no jukyō*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Tokyo: Perikansha, 1992), 29

<sup>48</sup> Hayashi Razan, "*Santokushō*," in *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, ed. Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, NST, vol. 28 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 173-75.

philosophical stance from Seika, more inclined to Zhu Xi's side, there is no reason to believe that this related directly to Razan's intention to create Seika's image as an anti-Buddhist.

Previous scholars have believed that Razan abandoned his affiliation with Kenninji from a similar anti-Buddhism motive, choosing to associate himself with Seika. Since Razan thereby gave up the opportunity to become a monk, his motive for converting to Neo-Confucianism had also been sought in his anti-Buddhism. While Seika has left no hint in his extant writings as to his motivations for conversion, Razan himself obviously manifested that he left the temple because he was disappointed by Buddhist logic and Buddhist denial of the family, and his philosophical essays also support this interpretation. Razan especially criticized the Buddhist worldview for its focus on the substantial emptiness (Skt., *sunyata*; J., *kyo*).

Confucianism is real while Buddhism is empty... Who will choose the empty over the real? The failure of Buddhism lies in taking emptiness by ignoring the real way. They even cannot distinguish between real and empty.... The master Cheng stated that Buddhism allures the people's mind like wicked songs and colorful appearances. The master Zhu added that the Buddhist concept of the extinction of the passions and of the cycles of birth and death (J., *jakumetsu*) seems lofty but is actually unreal.<sup>49</sup>

Morimoto argues that Neo-Confucianism in China criticized the Buddhist worldview based on the afterlife as an unethical thought, and established its own metaphysics

---

<sup>49</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 1: 32-33.



independent from Buddhism by making the discontinuity from Zen Buddhist tradition, and Neo-Confucianism in Japan exactly followed the trace of this Chinese way.<sup>50</sup> If we accept this account, it would be natural that Razan, as one of the pioneers of Japanese Neo-Confucianism, had been regarded as an anti-Buddhist who attempted this sort of discontinuity. However, neither the nature of Neo-Confucianism in Japan, nor Razan himself, is susceptible to such a simplistic explanation. As already discussed, Neo-Confucianism in Japan was in a quite different situation from the counterpart in China, and Razan showed a complicated attitude toward Buddhism.

First of all, we should be careful to connect Razan's anti-Buddhism with the philosophical preference of Neo-Confucianism. According to Hori Isao, Razan read the *Five Canons* of Confucianism while studying in Kenninji, but first encountered Zhu Xi's commentaries only in 1600.<sup>51</sup> Meanwhile, Razan actually left the temple in 1597. This implies that Razan encountered Neo-Confucian texts only *after* he left Kenninji. That is to say, the assertion that Razan left the temple because he was inspired by Neo-Confucianism does not stand.

Then what made Razan leave the temple? Razan's departure of Kenninji was a kind of graduation, and his personal sentiment or opinion on Buddhism did not greatly affect his decision. I also believe that Razan's major purpose in entering the temple was to study Sinological scholarship, not to become a Buddhist monk. As Hoashi Banri stated, a Zen

---

<sup>50</sup> Morimoto Junichirō, *Nihon shisōshi*, 2: 21

<sup>51</sup> Hori Isao, *Hayashi Razan*, 27.

monastery was not only a religious place but also an educational institute in Razan's time.<sup>52</sup>

In general, the people who wanted to study entered the temple and graduated when they were thirteen years old.<sup>53</sup> Razan joined Kenninji at age thirteen, quite late compared to the norm, and received an offer from the temple in 1598 when he turned fifteen. In a sense, Razan just declined the offer and decided not to be a regular Zen monk, and this would not be a problem for Razan's future plan to pursue scholarship because, thanks to Seika, there already was an avenue of access to scholarship outside the monastery.

He continued to pursue Chinese studies, including history and Neo-Confucianism, after he left the temple. By that time Seika had already established his own private academy and had trained several junior Neo-Confucian scholars, so Razan got in touch with them. In 1603, Razan offered a public lecture on the Confucian Classics along with Matsunaga Teitoku (1571-1654), one of the leading poets in Kyoto. This event immediately invited controversy because theretofore only Hakase-ke scholars had been authorized to lecture on the Classics in Kyoto.

However, this also helped Razan to advertise his name among intellectual society, and he later had the opportunity to become acquainted with Seika as a result of this event. This relationship in turn changed Razan's fate because Seika recommended him to Ieyasu as a candidate for drafting official documents for the shogunate.

It is obvious that Razan showed an anti-Buddhist attitude but Razan had unnecessarily expressed excessive anti-Buddhist sentiment and sometimes exaggerated

---

<sup>52</sup> Hoashi Banri, *Tōsenfuron*, 68.

<sup>53</sup> Inoguchi Atsushi and Matano Tarō, *Fujiwara Seika Matsunaga Sekigo*, 15.

episodes of Buddhist monks. For instance, Razan stated that Shūhō Myōchō (1282-1338), a famous late-Kamakura Rinzai Zen monk, killed and ate his child and burned his house down in order to become a monk.<sup>54</sup>

Considering Razan's intellectual ability and his various knowledge of history, it is hard to accept that Razan seriously trusted this sheer nonsense. In fact, Razan was quite knowledgeable about Myōchō. In 1619, the shogun Hidetada ordered Razan to appraise a piece of Myōchō's calligraphy to identify if it was genuine. Thanks to the fame of Myōchō, his calligraphy was often sold as a collector's item. Oda Nagamasu (1547-1622) a daimyo bought one from a monk at Daitokuji, which Myōchō himself had established. However, the authenticity of the piece was challenged, and Razan appraised it as a counterfeit upon being questioned by the shogun.<sup>55</sup> This shows that Razan knew about Myōchō quite well but intentionally spread false information of him for some reason. It seems that Razan tried to amplify his own image as an anti-Buddhist, and it is likely that Razan's attempt to create the image of Seika as an anti-Buddhist related to this as well.

After leaving the temple, Razan commented that he admired Kokan Shiren (1278-1346) a famous Rinzai monk and his work, *Shūbun inryaku*, the first rhyming dictionary rhymes for Chinese poetry compiled in Japan.<sup>56</sup> When Razan was hired by Ieyasu in 1607, Ieyasu ordered Razan shave his head and to wear a Buddhist monk's robe. The title Razan received from the shogunate was *hōin*, a Buddhist title. Nakae Tōju (1608-1648), an

---

<sup>54</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 2: 671.

<sup>55</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Hayashi Razan nenpukō*, 58.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 13-14.

exponent of Wang Yangming's teachings, harshly criticized Razan's acceptance of the Buddhist title as a betrayal of the Confucian code.

Hayashi Dōshun [Razan] is good at memorizing [what he has read] and is a polymath. He is talking about the way of Confucianism but his words are not sincere. He follows the way of Buddhism. Contrary to Principle, he got his head shaved.<sup>57</sup>

Of course, we need to understand the situation that Razan was placed. Ieyasu ordered Razan to have a monk appearance because he was simply familiar with the convention to hire Zen monks as intellectual assistants, and it would be difficult for Razan to decline the order from Ieyasu, the absolute power of the shogunate. Suzuki Ken'ichi argues that Razan, as the Confucianist, felt insulted by Ieyasu's order but accepted it to compromise with the reality.<sup>58</sup> On the other hand, Boot introduces Razan's sophistry to justify his action to accept a Buddhist position and the tonsure.

*Hōin* is a Buddhist rank..., but my brother and I are, of course, Confucianists.

Well then, that we have shaved our hair is in pursuance of the long-established custom of our country. In what do we differ from T'ai-po who cut his hair, or from Confucius who [wore] his national dress? Why then should we worry about it?

The former kings had clothes of the law (*fā-fu*; J. *hōfuku*). They had words of the law (*fā-yen*; J. *hōgen*). The Four Books and the Five Classics have their method of reading (*tu-fa*; J. *dokuhō*). These can all be seen [, written down with] brush and ink; thus they will be handed down for ever. Ink, therefore, is used to transmit the

---

<sup>57</sup> Nakae Tōju, "Rinshi teihatsu juiben," in *Nakae Tōju*, ed. Yamanoi Yū, et al., NST, vol. 29 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974), 13-16.

<sup>58</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Hayashi Razan nenpukō*, 26-27.

seal (*yin*; J. *in*) of the literature of antiquity. This is the seal of the law (*fā-yin*; J. *hōin*) that I have taken.<sup>59</sup>

In any case, however, these anecdotes reveal that Razan actually showed a more flexible face at times, different from his well-known hard anti-Buddhist attitude. If we examine Razan's choice to leave the temple through the lens of religious conversion, we can say it is close to a "defection," which refers to "converting away from conventional religion, they repudiate their past religious world view in favor of a new, not necessarily religious, worldview."<sup>60</sup>

However, Razan seemed to intentionally amplify his anti-Buddhist attitude to show his choice as a "tradition transition." This gap between rhetoric and action was produced by conditions that required Razan to show a strong anti-Buddhist attitude. In other words, Razan had to use anti-Buddhism tactically, for his own sake.

In addition, Razan used Seika's name and image to fortify his political status in the shogunate, rather than to express any Neo-Confucian idealism, our consideration on Razan's manipulation of Seika's image should focus on Razan's personal ambition rather than the matter of the spread of Neo-Confucian ideas. Razan composed the *Seika sensei gyōjō*, his biography of Fujiwara Seika, in 1620, the year after Seika's death. As Skinner suggested, researchers must reconstruct Razan's socio-political situation around that time to read between the lines of his description of Seika.

---

<sup>59</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 180-81.

<sup>60</sup> Dialogue Ireland, "Interview: Lewis R. Rambo".  
<http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/resources/dciarchive/zinterviewrambo.html> (accessed July 4, 2011)

## Competition with the Zen Monks

To understand more clearly Razan's anti-Buddhist attitude in a different perspective, it is necessary first to explore the relationship of Razan and the power dynamics of the intellectual sphere in the Tokugawa shogunate.

Razan entered the shogunate as a document drafter when he was twenty-two. Some scholars have argued that hiring Razan signifies that the shogunate began to shift its intellectual tradition from Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism. For instance, David Dilworth argues that Ieyasu made an epochal decision to shift spiritual authority from Buddhism to the metaphysical and humanistic thought of Neo-Confucianism.<sup>61</sup> However, this is a total misunderstanding. Ieyasu had relied Jōtai, a Zen monk who had previously worked for Hideyoshi, as his major intellectual advisor. Although Razan was hired in 1608 when Jōtai died, this does not mean that Razan replaced Jōtai. Rather, Ieyasu hired Ishin Sūden (1569-1633), the abbot of Nanzenji<sup>62</sup>, soon after he hired Razan, and it was Sūden, not Razan, who served as Jōtai's successor as Ieyasu's principal intellectual adviser. From the time he was hired, until Sūden's death in 1633, Razan was Sūden's subordinate.

Even in the early years of the Tokugawa shogunate, the Kyoto Gozan monasteries of Zen Buddhism were the most powerful network in the intellectual market. Ieyasu followed the tradition of the previous shogunate, and Toyotomi Hideyoshi, to hire intellectual advisors and assistants from the manpower pool of the Zen monastery. That was why Ieyasu ordered Razan to shave his head and wear monk's robes. Sūden was hired by Ieyasu

---

<sup>61</sup> Dilworth, "Jitsugaku as an Ontological Conception: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early and Mid-Tokugawa Thought," 476.

<sup>62</sup> Tsuji Zennosuke, *Nihon Bukkyōshi no kenkyū*, vol. 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984), 261.

on the recommendation of Jōtai and was in charge of dealing with the drafting of laws and composition of diplomatic documents. Ieyasu trusted and supported Sūden and asked him to prepare the initial draft of the *Buke shohatto* (Laws for the Military Houses), which governed the conduct of daimyo houses, and the *Kinchū narabi ni kuge shohatto* (Laws for the Imperial House and Courtier Houses), which governed the court and determined the relationship the daimyos and the court. Sūden was also responsible for responding to diplomatic matters concerning China, Korea, and Spain. Kang Hongjung (1577-1642) who visited Japan in 1624 as a member of the Korean embassy introduced Sūden in his journal as the main responsible officer for diplomatic documents and also described him as a skillful writer trusted by the shogun.<sup>63</sup> Sūden earned such a high reputation from these works that he was called “the prime minister in black robes.”

Razan could not compete as an equal with Sūden. He was merely a low-ranked document drafter who had to submit his draft for Sūden’s revision.<sup>64</sup> Ooms employs specific numbers to show the real position of Razan and Neo-Confucianism in the shogunate. He argues that Neo-Confucianism received less recognition from the Tokugawa shogunate than did Shinto or Buddhism. For example, the shogunate’s official funding for Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples far exceeded that afforded to the Neo-Confucian academy. The shogunate bestowed 50,000 *ryo* of gold to Kan’eiji, the Tendai temple built

---

<sup>63</sup> Kang Hongjung, “Tongsarok,” accessed March 11, 2013, DKC, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=KO%26seojiId=kc\\_ko\\_c010%26noUpSeoji=kc\\_ko\\_m006%26gunchaId=av001%26muncheId=06%26finId=114%26guboonNodeId=%26NodeId=-kc\\_ko\\_m006](http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=KO%26seojiId=kc_ko_c010%26noUpSeoji=kc_ko_m006%26gunchaId=av001%26muncheId=06%26finId=114%26guboonNodeId=%26NodeId=-kc_ko_m006)

<sup>64</sup> Ronald P. Toby, “Kinsei shotō tai-Min no ichi gaikō monjo shohon no keifu: gosha, godoku, goki no keifu to Nihon-gata ka’i ron,” *Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo kenkyū kiyō* 13 (2003): 61-63.

by Tenkai another Buddhist intellectual advisor of Ieyasu while it gave only 200 *ryo* to Razan's Confucian shrine located in Ueno.<sup>65</sup>

It is certain that the existence of Razan contributed to the expansion of the space for Confucian scholars in the shogunate, but Ieyasu hired him due to his encyclopedic knowledge, not because he decided to adopt Neo-Confucianism as state ideology. Ieyasu's questions in the interview with Razan also reveal what he actually expected from Neo-Confucian scholars.

In 1605, Jō Masashige (1552-1626), one of Ieyasu's vassals who also studied at Seika's school, organized a meeting at Nijo Castle in Kyoto to introduce his colleagues, Razan among them, to Ieyasu. In this meeting, Ieyasu asked Razan the following three questions: Which generation from the founder of the Han dynasty was the emperor Guangwu descended from? Which book detailing the emperor Wu's scent was used in the ritual recalling his dead queen's spirit? What was the species of Quyan's (340-270 BCE) favorite orchid? Of course, Razan answered all of these questions, contributing to his subsequent employment by Ieyasu in 1608.<sup>66</sup>

These questions imply that Ieyasu hired Razan not because he was fascinated by Neo-Confucian philosophy, but because he was impressed by Razan's encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese literature and culture. That is to say, Ieyasu invited Neo-Confucian scholars to supply literary information for political purposes rather than for teaching Neo-Confucian philosophy itself.

---

<sup>65</sup> Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680*, 75.

<sup>66</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Hayashi Razan nenpukō*, 21.



In 1614, Ieyasu ordered Sūden and Razan to select ten skillful scribes from Gozan monasteries to copy manuscripts of ancient records.<sup>67</sup> This shows that Ieyasu still considered Gozan as the main pool of the intellectual manpower and regarded Razan as little more than an assistant to Sūden. Sūden had hired document drafters through the Nanzenji network, while Razan was a lonely outsider in the intellectual system of the early shogunate and had to struggle with isolation.

In this atmosphere, another problem came to him in 1619 because Sūden was named *sōroku*, giving him authority over all Zen temples nationwide. The post of *sōroku*, which represented religious authority over all Zen sects, had originated with Shunnoku Myōha (1312-88), the first abbot of Shōkokuji, and had been monopolized by Shōkokuji abbots; when the shogunate appointed Sūden to the post of *sōroku*, the post came to be identified with Nanzenji, Sūden's home temple.<sup>68</sup> The first three Tokugawa shoguns, that is, followed three centuries of tradition in hiring Zen clerics as shogunal advisors and document drafters, and they usually drew them from the talent pool of Shōkokuji; Sūden's predecessor Jōtai had been the abbot of Shōkokuji when he was called on to serve as Ieyasu's advisor. However Sūden's appointment as *sōroku* changed the situation, signifying Sūden's growing role in the shogunate; the shogunate correspondingly increased its reliance on recruitment from Nanzenji.

This promotion of Sūden looks like his triumph in the shogunate, however there was a complicated political backdrop. In fact, Sūden's political influence declined dramatically

---

<sup>67</sup> DNS, pt. 17, vol. 12, 164, accessed May 5, 2012, DNSSD (020100021445)

<sup>68</sup> Tamamuro Fumio, "Sūden no shōgai," in *Seikai no dōsha Tenkai Sūden*, ed. Tamamuro Fumio (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 123.

after Ieyasu died in 1616. In terms of intellectual power dynamics within the shogunate, Nankōbō Tenkai (1536-1643), a monk of the Tendai sect, was a serious rival of Sūden for political influence. Tenkai's influence was even proved with the process of Ieyasu's apotheosis. After Ieyasu died, the shogunate deified Ieyasu as Tōshō Gongen, and built a huge shrine for his spirit at Nikkō, north of Edo. One of the major issues in this deification project was to determine the form of Shintō-Buddhist syncretism that would govern Ieyasu's deification, and Tenkai and Sūden, the paramount intellectuals in the shogunate, each proposed their ideas at the same time. Sūden argued that Ieyasu should be deified as a *Daimyōjin*, in accordance with the traditions of Yoshida Shintō, while Tenkai argued for deification as a *Daimyōjin*, following the canons of Sannō Ichijitsu Shintō, a form of Shintō-Buddhist syncretism associated with the Tendai sect. This occasioned a fierce debate, but in the end the shogunate accepted Tenkai's suggestion.<sup>69</sup>

After the deification of Ieyasu, Tenkai's religious influence became greater and he built his own temple, Kan'eiji. The location of Kan'eiji represented Tenkai's position in the shogunate. Kan'eiji was built in Ueno, to the northeast of Edo Castle where shogun lived. In Japanese geomancy, the northeast quarter from the center of certain place is believed to be the "demon gate" (*kimon*), where the center is at risk of evil influences. Tenkai built his temple with financial support from the shogunate in Ueno, the *kimon* location as viewed from Edo Castle, to proclaim that he was the religious protector of the shogunate. As a matter of fact, Tenkai borrowed this idea from the city plan of Kyoto. In Kyoto, Hieizan Enryakuji, the most powerful Buddhist temple of the Tendai sect, was

---

<sup>69</sup> Sonehara Satoshi, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō: Tōshōgū to gongen-sama* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008), 57-60.

located in the *kimon* quarter vis-à-vis the location of the imperial capital to serve as the religious protector of the court. According to the traditional rules of the Tendai sect, all Tendai temples in the Kanto area were supposed to serve as branch temples of Enryakuji, but as Tenkai's influence grew, the shogunate gave independent authority over Kanto area Tendai temples to Tenkai. In this sense, Kan'eiji served as the symbol of both Tenkai's triumph in the shogunate and Kanto Tendai's independence from Kyoto Tendai.<sup>70</sup>

As Tenkai's power in the political and sphere grew, the influence of Sūden was limited to the sphere of intellectual service in the shogunate and to the control of the Rinzaï sect. Sūden's promotion to *sōroku* was a kind of a gift from the second shogun Hidetada to consulate Sūden's loss in the battle with Tenkai.

Tenkai's success would not affect Razan's life in the shogunate because his territory was quite different from Razan's, but the promotion of Sūden to the position of *sōroku* immediately affected Razan's status. As Sūden's influence was limited to the intellectual side, Razan had to feel more pressure in the competition with Sūden and Rinzaï monks. Only many years later when Sūden died in 1633 was Razan promoted to the position of political advisor. With Sūden's death, Razan was finally able to expand his influence in the shogunate, and establish his family as the shogunate's official intellectual corps, but the road to that destination was not even at all.

Razan had to compete with not only Sūden but also his successors and they were not easy opponents. Even Sūden's successor earned better reputation than Razan from the Korean embassy while Razan received somewhat negative one. Nam Yongik (1628-1692),

---

<sup>70</sup> Urai Shōmyō, "Higashi Hiezan Kan'eiji no seiritsu to tenkai," in *Seikai no dōsha Tenkai Sūden*, ed. Tamamuro Fumio (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004), 78-80.

a Korean Neo-Confucianist who visited Japan in 1655 as a member of the Korean embassy, praised Saigaku Genryō who succeeded the position of *Konchiin* from Sūden that his writing skills which appeared in the diplomatic documents was excellent and his behavior and manner were quite lofty and gentle.<sup>71</sup> At the same time, Nam stated about Razan that that he could see that Razan had read many classical works from his writing, which is decorated with plentiful quotes and expressions. However, Nam also added that he did not seem to really understand the deep meaning of what he wrote.<sup>72</sup>

In this regard, the year of 1619 was a critical time for Razan's survival in the shogunate. He needed to do something to defend and increase his influence but he was merely a young and minor *literati* in the shogunate. He did not have enough influence to resist Kyoto Gozan power. Razan had been aware of this and tried to find a way to advertise that his quality as a scholar was better than that of a Zen monk. To do this, Razan needed to show 'objective' evidence proving the scholastic superiority of his academic lineage. Razan himself was not in the position to directly challenge to the authority of senior monks in the shogunate in terms of political influence. Thus he borrowed the name and the image of Seika, the prominent scholar claiming Neo-Confucian identity who died in 1619.

---

<sup>71</sup> Nam Yongik, "Munkyōn pyōlnok," accessed September 21, 2012, DKC, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=KO%26seojiId=kc\\_ko\\_e008%26noUpSeoji=kc\\_ko\\_m006%26gunchaId=av001%26muncheId=11%26finId=039%26guboonNodeId=%26NodeId=-kc\\_ko\\_m006](http://db.itkc.or.kr/index.jsp?bizName=KO&url=/itkcdb/text/nodeViewIframe.jsp%3FbizName=KO%26seojiId=kc_ko_e008%26noUpSeoji=kc_ko_m006%26gunchaId=av001%26muncheId=11%26finId=039%26guboonNodeId=%26NodeId=-kc_ko_m006)

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, accessed August 23, 2010, DKC, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcdb/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc\\_mk\\_e008&gunchaId=av001&finId=036&startOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_e008\\_av001\\_036&endOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_e008\\_av001\\_036](http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcdb/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc_mk_e008&gunchaId=av001&finId=036&startOrgnText=kc_ko_e008_av001_036&endOrgnText=kc_ko_e008_av001_036)

I think that *Seika sensei gyōjō* was the result of one of these actions. First of all, Razan intended to situate himself as the successor of Fujiwara Seika's scholarship by writing Seika's biography. In general, Razan is often regarded as the successor of Seika's scholarship. However, Boot argues that it cannot be true. According to him, it is certain that Seika and Razan had some relationship for academic discussions, but there were clear difference of the stance between Seika and Razan. In addition, Seika did not consider Razan one of his disciples while Razan wanted to find himself as Seika's student.<sup>73</sup>

Razan failed to be recognized by Seika during Seika's lifetime. In terms of the academic lineage, Matsunaga Seikgo was real Seika's successor. However, Razan made it after Seika died. He appropriated the name of Fujiwara Seika to fortify his image as a prominent Neo-Confucianist. He also expressed his own anti-Buddhist sentiment through Seika's voice by manipulation the image of Seika to an anti-Buddhist. *Gyōjō* satisfied these two demands from Razan. According to *Gyōjō*, Seika criticized the contradictions of Buddhist philosophy from a Neo-Confucian perspective and even labeled Buddhism as heresy. However, this kind of strong criticism of Buddhism is rarely seen in Seika's essays because, as I previously discussed, Seika still kept an affirmative attitude toward Buddhism.

At a glance, Razan's anti-Buddhism seems like a criticism of Buddhism itself. However, precisely speaking, his anti-Buddhism was directed towards Rinzai Zen sect rather than other sects such as Tendai, and his confrontation with Zen was not due to religious or philosophical issues. Razan's challenge to Rinzai Zen was the conflict between two practical groups which had competed for the actual share of the profession in the

---

<sup>73</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 47-50.

shogunate. In a short, Razan criticized Buddhism and Buddhist monks to challenge their authority and to advertise the quality of his scholarship. In fact, Razan left an interesting remark when he introduced the debate between Seika and Zen monks at the Nijō castle.

Somebody invited Seika the master. Jōtai, and Reisan could not read handwritings in the calligraphy on the wall but the master read them quite well. Somebody said that reading handwritings is difficult while it is easy to read printed one. The master said no. He said that a scholar who had read the printed a lot also could read handwritings well. Jōtai, and Reisan became unpleasant after they heard the master's remark.<sup>74</sup>

If you remember the first-half part of this anecdote that I introduced in the chapter 1, you can remind that Razan stated that Seika criticized Buddhism from the perspective of Confucianism. That is to say, main point of the anti-Buddhism in this story began from the philosophical difference between Confucianism and Buddhism but concluded to the issue of the level of reading skill. What does this mean? This remark reveals what Razan wanted to talk about. Razan needed to propagandize anti-Buddhism to overcome this political situation. He had to propagandize the superiority of Neo-Confucianism over Zen Buddhism for his survival.

### **Image Marketing**

Did this strategy work? I think so. Razan served the shogunate for fifty years handling diplomatic documents, legislation and publishing projects. Thanks to his great service, Razan's descendants enjoyed the hereditary privilege to work for the shogunate for

---

<sup>74</sup> Hayashi Razan, "Seika sensei gyōjō," 3.

generations and they began to replace Rinzai Zen monks after all. Razan skillfully advertise his scholarship and had exaggerated the shogunate's interest in himself and Confucianism as well. It was Razan's another marketing strategy.

Razan was also good at advertising himself and his family by exaggerating facts. Confucian shrine was one of those examples. The Hayashi family's initial Confucian shrine was built by Razan, a first Neo-Confucianist hired by the shogunate, in 1632. Razan built a private Confucian shrine, named Senseiden at his place in Ueno. The main purpose of this shrine was to worship Confucius. This shrine owes much to Tokugawa Yoshinao (1600-1650)'s Confucian shrine in the Owari prefecture. Tokugawa Yoshinao was a founder of the Owari branch of the Tokugawa family and known as a loyal follower of Neo-Confucianism. He built his own Confucian shrine in his castle and performed the Confucian rituals by himself. He also taught basic structural concepts of the Confucian shrine to Hayashi Razan and endowed a golden statue of Confucius, utensils, and funds.<sup>75</sup>

The shogun Iemitsu (1604-1651) visited Razan's Confucian shrine and listened to the lecture of the *Book of History* from Razan in 1633. Hayashi Razan's biography noted it as a significant event indicating that the shogun officially recognized the significance of shrine. The reality, however, was different. Ueno in which Hayashi Razan's Confucian shrine was the territory of the temple, Kan'eiji built by Tenkai, a Buddhist shogunal advisor, and it had Tōshōgū, the shrine for Tokugawa Ieyasu. The shogun Iemitsu regularly visited Tōshōgū and sometimes made casual visits to Razan's shrine on the way back to the castle.<sup>76</sup> These

---

<sup>75</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 1: 164-65.

<sup>76</sup> Nakayama Kyūshirō, *Seidō ryakushi* (Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1998), 5.

casual stops could be a good chance for Razan to make the shogun to be familiar with Confucian culture but this actually is a different story if somebody argues that the shogun visited to the shrine because he liked Neo-Confucianism.

On the side of financial aid, Hayashi Razan also emphasized that the financial aid for the Confucian shrine was from the shogunate. I already introduced Ooms' account on it. For the Tokugawa shogunate the Confucian shrine was only the Hayashi family's private property. Although the shogunate endowed funds for the shrine, it was a part of their stipend.

There were two purposes for Razan to overemphasize the relationship between the shrine and the shogunate. One was the invention of the tradition of the shogunate's official support for Neo-Confucianism and the Confucian shrine. Hayashi Razan's position of a shogunal advisor was unstable compared with other Buddhist advisories because his contribution to the shogunal politics was limited.

Until the period of the shogun Iemitsu, Razan could maintain the influence because he was hired by Ieyasu whom Iemitsu extremely admired, but nobody could guarantee the next shogun's grace for Razan and his family. It was, therefore, necessary for Razan to accumulate evidences of the support from the shogunate for the future of the Hayashi family.

The other purpose was to cope with the competition with other Confucianists in the field of Chinese studies. Although Razan was hired by the shogunate, it did not signify that Razan's scholarship enjoyed greater prestige. There were many famous Confucian scholars. They were hired by daimyo and enjoyed good stipends. For instance, Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691) and Yamaga Sokō (1622-1685), had not only made names for themselves;



they also were better paid than Razan: his stipend had climbed from 300 *hyō* in 1611 to 917 *koku* in 1651, whereas Banzan and Sokō received stipends of 3,000 and 1,000 *koku*, respectively.<sup>77</sup>

Razan needed to overcome this circumstance and he advertised his scholarship as the shogune's official scholarship by exaggerating the support from the shogunate. In terms of marketing, Razan was brilliant enough from the beginning. In 1603, Razan offered the public lecture of *Analects* at Kyoto and this invited some troubles. *Tokugawa Jikki* describes this event as follows.

One year, Dōshun [one of Razan's other names] gathered his students and lectured new commentaries of *Analects*. Listeners gathered from everywhere hear the lecture, like a market outside a temple gate. Kiyohara Hidetaka [1575-1614] appealed this to the court. He stated, "Never before in our land has anyone lectured on the Confucian classics without the permission of the court. but Dōshun is personally lecturing in public. Moreover, He does not respect the Han and Tang commentaries, but follows the new theories of the Song [Neo-Confucian] scholars. This is not a minor crime, but since opinion at court wasn't uniform, we sought the opinion of the shogunate. Whereupon the lord [Ieyasu] stated, "The way of the sages was that if the people did not study they could not attain the Way; [scholars] should teach the new and old commentaries according to their preferences when instructing the people.

When Hidetaka attempted to prevent Dōshun [from teaching], it was only because of

---

<sup>77</sup> Ooms, *Tokugawa Ideology*, 76.

jealousy. His behavior was awkward.” Consequently, Hidetaka’s appeal was rejected by the court.<sup>78</sup>

This event seems like an attempt by Razan to spread Neo-Confucian scholarship to the public. One might also interpret it as indicating Ieyasu’s belief in Neo-Confucianism and his valuing of Razan’s scholarship. However, it is quite hard to accept at face value Razan’s account suggesting that Ieyasu rejected Hidetaka’s petition in order to spread Confucian values. By that time, the esoteric circulation of scholarship was already loosened since Seika established his academy at Kyoto, teaching Chinese literature and Neo-Confucian texts were no longer monopolized by Hakase-ke or Rinzaï Zen monks. These intellectuals did not research scholarship only for self-cultivation or as a hobby; they needed to do so for their livelihood.

In fact, Razan’s lecture on *Analects* was a part of the series of the literary group lecture. In this series, Endō Shūmu (? - ?) a physician offered the lecture of *Taiheiki* and Matsunaga Teitoku (1571-1654) a poet opened the public lecture of *Tsurezuregusa*.<sup>79</sup> Yokota Fuyuhiko argues that there was a boom of public lecture in Kyoto that time and these public lectures were significant events which broke the esoteric cartel of the intellectual sources and brought them to the public sphere. He also adds that this changed the way of transmitting scholarship from esoteric teaching to open book publishing.<sup>80</sup>

---

<sup>78</sup> “*Tōshōgū gyōjikki furoku*,” in *Tokugawa jikki*, SZKT, vol. 38 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007). 340-41.

<sup>79</sup> Yokota Fuyuhiko, “Shomotsu o meguru hitobito,” in *Chishiki to gakumon o ninau hitobito*, ed. Yokota Fuyuhiko (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007), 1-3.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 3-5.

Among these, Razan's topic concerning the Neo-Confucian commentaries on Analects was the most risky compared to Shūmu's and Teitoku's because it directly evoked Hakase-ke's interest. However, Razan was smart enough to utilize this as the momentum of marketing for his scholarship. I believe that Razan perhaps anticipated that it would not be an obstacle because the authority of Hakase-ke was already weakened by other independent Neo-Confucianists in Kyoto.

In addition, Razan convinced Teitoku, a prominent poet, to take a part in his lecture to compensate for the lack of career. His challenge was a quite efficient way to advertise his name to both intellectual society and politics. Whether or not it was intended, the conflict with his lecture and Hakase-ke resulted in the impact of a buzz marketing.

He earned the recognition by both the shogunate which had warrior house culture respecting the people of abilities and the league of other intellectuals. In this process, Razan became famous and finally able to enter the shogunate with Seika's recommendation. Razan needed to advertise their skills and quality and to market himself, and this lecture was a way to do so.

Although he offered the lectures to the public, the term of 'public' did not refer to the commoners. It is true that the publishing industry in Japan dramatically developed during the early Tokugawa period since the source and the technology of publishing was transferred from Korea while Hidyoshi's invasion of Korea. However, the increase of publications did not immediately affect the commoners' life because books were still expensive and unnecessary things to the commoners that time. The real expansion of the book publishing and readership in the commoners' sphere happened only after the middle

of 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>81</sup> The term ‘public’ actually refers to other intellectual colleagues, the rivalry suppliers in the intellectual market and political and military leaders, the buyers in the market.

---

<sup>81</sup> Henry D. Smith, “The History of the Book in Edo and Paris,” in *Edo & Paris*, ed. James L. McClain, John M. Meriman, and Ugawa Kaoru (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 341.

## Chapter 4: Rise of Professional Neo-Confucianists

### Expansion of the Neo-Confucian Population

What is the historical significance of Seika? The common concept of the contribution of Seika usually follows what we saw in the narratives from *Sentetsu sōdan* proposing that Seika is the founding father of Neo-Confucian scholarship in Japan. It is certain that Seika's conversion to a Neo-Confucian scholar, precisely speaking, an non-monastery scholar involved with Neo-Confucian scholarship, liberated Neo-Confucian scholarship from the confinement of Zen monasteries. However, I already discussed this issue in the previous chapter and concluded that his conversion was propelled by a more professional motive than a philosophical one. In addition, I also proposed that Seika's interest and understanding of Neo-Confucian philosophy was much less deep than we expected. This implies that we have to step away from the philosophy paradigm when we search for Seika's actual role in history. Paolo Beonio-Brocchieri proposes an interesting argument:

I am inclined to think that the specific of his importance consists in the fact that he perceived (or was the symbol and interpreter of) a need to provide the Japanese world with a new lexicon and a new intellectual grammar or syntax rendered necessary by the dramatically rapid evolution seen by the Japanese world during the sixteenth century, an evolution to which the setting up of the Tokugawa régime is the response at the level of institutions and of politics....

If we regard this as significant, a third fact becomes particularly illuminating: a) Fujiwara Seika does not make known to the Japanese thinkers who had been

unknown until that time (because this had already been done by his Zen masters) nor does he develop in a particularly original way the work of these thinkers (who, however, we know, were to be handled with remarkable originality by the Japanese thinkers in the decades immediately following); what he does is to present to this country the neo-Confucian philosophical language (itself already known) as a conceptual lexicon and syntax more appropriate to his own times....

In this connection I consider of great importance his demand (contested in traditional circles) for a kind of teaching that would be up to a point public, evidenced by his decision to agree in 1599 to Akamatsu Hiromichi's request that the Chinese classics should be made legible to the Japanese; also by the preparedness of his intellectual coterie (Matsunaga Teitoku, Hayashi Razan) to comment publicly on works that had until that time been reserved for highly restricted audiences.<sup>1</sup>

In this argument, Beonio-Brocchieri suggests that Seika conceptualized Neo-Confucianism to help the public to easily understand it, thus liberating Neo-Confucian scholarship from the monopoly of "highly restricted audience." I generally agree with this perspective, but I think that we should consider the term "conceptualization" from a utilitarian angle rather than a philosophical one. In this sense, I would like to define it as the conceptualization of Neo-Confucianist's style. Prior to Seika, Neo-Confucianism was a part of Zen monks' culture and there had been no independent concept of Neo-Confucianism. Seika changed this by introducing Neo-Confucianist styles such as the hair style, the dress, rituals, and the Neo-Confucian academy that had not been in Japan to persuade the people

---

<sup>1</sup> Paolo Beonio-Brocchieri, "On the Historical Importance of Fujiwara Seika," *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 610-11.

to accept the fact that there was a professionalized scholar for Neo-Confucian scholarship instead of Zen monks. I also believe that this actually helped the expansion of the Confucian population and that Seika's most important contribution to history can be found here.

Being a scholar involved with Confucian scholarship was not easy for the people who had neither Zen nor nobility affiliations because of the limited access to the scholarship. However, Seika's survival as an independent scholar outside the monastery changed the situation. After Seika established his own academy in Kyoto, many professional Neo-Confucian scholars also moved to establish their own private academies in Kyoto and around the Kinki area.

| 1624 - 1687 |    | 1688-1735 |    | 1736-1788 |    |
|-------------|----|-----------|----|-----------|----|
| Kyōto       | 11 | Kanazawa  | 1  | Kyōto     | 10 |
| Ōsaka       | 2  | Kyōto     | 11 | Edo       | 20 |
| Tosa        | 1  | Nagasaki  | 2  | Kawachi   | 1  |
|             |    | Edo       | 6  | Ōsaka     | 3  |
|             |    | Fushimi   | 1  | Nagasaki  | 1  |
|             |    | Ōsaka     | 3  | Kawagoe   | 1  |
|             |    |           |    | Nagoya    | 2  |
|             |    |           |    | Tsu       | 1  |
|             |    |           |    | Ōmi       | 1  |
| Total       | 14 |           | 24 |           | 40 |

Table 1. Distribution of Private Academies in the Early Tokugawa Period<sup>2</sup>

These statistics indicate that many more private academies were established in Kyoto than in other areas in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. As time went by, however, private academies

<sup>2</sup> Suzuki Hirō, "Kinsei shijuku no shiteki kōsatsu," *Yokohama Kokuritsu Daigaku kyōiku kiyō* 1 (1962): 17.

were established in other cities and Edo arose as the capital of Confucian scholarship later as well as Kyoto. According to Emura Hokkai (1713-88), a mid-Tokugawa Confucian scholar, every year several hundred students from other domains rushed to Kyoto to learn Confucian studies.<sup>3</sup>

According to Umihara Tōru, there were over 1,500 large and small private schools across Japan over the entire course of the Tokugawa period, though not all of them were in operation at the same time.<sup>4</sup> Naramoto Tatsuya even argues that there were as many private schools as there were scholars.<sup>5</sup> Since, however, they do not suggest specific evidence, we cannot take their account at face value. Instead, we can see the trend of increasing numbers of private academies from Suzuki's research.

Matsunaga Sekigo (1592-1657), Seika's student founded the Kōshūdō (1637); Nakae Tōju (1608-1648), who studied Wang Yangming's learning, erected the TōjuShoin (1648); Yamazaki Ansai (1619-1682), who was committed to Zhu Xi studies, had Ansaijuku (1655), Itō Jinsai (1627-1705) had Kogidō (1662) and Kinoshita Jun'an (1621-1699), who had studied with Sekigo, established his Chijiku (year unknown). This signifies that access to Neo-Confucian scholarship was liberated from the inner-circle of the Zen monasteries with the emergence of these Neo-Confucian scholars because Neo-Confucian scholars from the commoner class emerged during that time.

---

<sup>3</sup> Emura Hokkai, *Jugyōhen*, SHNB, vol.3 (Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1891), 451.

<sup>4</sup> Suzuki Hirō, 18.

<sup>5</sup> Naramoto Tatsuya, *Nihon no shijuku* (Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1969), 53.



It was during the late 16<sup>th</sup> and the early 17<sup>th</sup> century when Neo-Confucian scholars from the commoner class appeared. They also established their own academies and those schools most often accepted commoners as well as members of higher social status. Suzuki Hirō examined biographies of Confucian scholars in the Tokugawa period and categorized the social status background of those scholars.

|           | Peasant | Merchant | Lower<br>Class<br>Samurai | Physician<br>Monk<br>Shinto Priest | Others | Sum |
|-----------|---------|----------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|--------|-----|
| 1624-1687 | 4       | 4        |                           |                                    | 1      | 9   |
| 1688-1735 | 3       | 6        | 3                         |                                    | 1      | 13  |
| 1736-1789 | 13      | 11       | 2                         | 1                                  | 1      | 28  |
| 1790-1839 | 6       | 9        |                           | 2                                  | 2      | 19  |
| 1840-1867 | 4       | 3        |                           |                                    | 1      | 8   |
| Sum       | 30      | 33       | 5                         | 3                                  | 6      | 77  |

Table 2. Social Background of Confucian Scholars<sup>6</sup>

In terms of statistics, Suzuki's data does not have a representative value because the size of the population of commoners who learned Confucian scholarship is small, but his statistics clearly indicate that commoners were one of the majorities of the Confucian community. During the Muromachi period (1333-1573), publishing work had been monopolized by Kyoto Gozan through printing Buddhist sutras and Confucian texts, but later publishers outside the monastery joined this business. They had published over 2,000 volumes in 1660s and increased the number to over 10,000 in 1730s.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Suzuki Hirō, "Kinsei shijuku no shiteki kōsatsu." 17.

<sup>7</sup> Yokota Fuyuhiko, "Shomotsu o meguru hitobito," 2-3.

About the rapid development of the publishing industry during 1600s, we cannot ignore the influence of the influx of publishing technology from the Korean peninsula as the result of the Hideyoshi's Invasion (1592-1598), but more important was the expansion of readership among commoners which made the Japanese publishing boom possible at that time in Japan.

### **Problems with the Ethical Creed Framework**

Why did the commoners become interested in studying Neo-Confucian scholarship? Watanabe argues that the popularity of Neo-Confucianism in the early Tokugawa period owed to the increased interest of rich urbanites in Chinese culture and humanistic studies. He found an interesting example from *Kashōki*, one of Kanazōshi literature written by Saitō Chikamori (1602-1674). According to Saitō's essay, people should clean and organize their home when they invite someone in. In addition, it would be a good idea to fill out their bookshelves with some books such as Confucian classics, *Tsurezuregusa*, and *Kōyō gunkan* to display their cultural and intellectual side.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, Watanabe concludes that the commoners' interest in Neo-Confucian scholarship was a sort of hobby or an action meant to emulate the higher classes. This implies that it did not matter for the people if they were really able to read Chinese classics or not but they realized that these literary works would help them to build more a sophisticated image of themselves. Of course, it is hard to deny that rich urban life heavily contributed to the growth of interest in scholarship and intellectual actions. For instance, Noma Sanchiku (1608-1676), a disciple of Matsunaga Sekigo (1592-1657) who would later become an official physician working for the

---

<sup>8</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*, 33-4.

shogunate, came from rich physician family, and Yasuhara Teishitsu (1610-1673), a disciple of Matsunaga Teitoku (1571-1654), was the member of a *waka* poet family. These families were neither samurai nor nobles but they were rich commoners able to support their children's study.

However, Watanabe's argument misses the point that many economically marginalized people also studied to become Neo-Confucianists. According to Unoda Shōya, many Confucian scholars in the Tokugawa period had to run other business for their living while pursuing Neo-Confucian scholarship and their economic level was not very high.<sup>9</sup> One of the famous *rakugo* repertoires, *Sorai tofu*, also renders the poor daily life of Ogyū Sorai as a young scholar.<sup>10</sup> Even Itō Jinsai confessed that his kinsmen persuaded him to stop studying Confucianism with the words that Confucianism would not help him to make money and dealing with medicine as a physician would be more profitable.<sup>11</sup>

As alternative answers to the question, some scholars have examined this issue from the perspective of individual ethics. Kate Nakai states that the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the early Tokugawa period owed to the significant increase of the number of people who adopted the teachings of the Confucian sages as a personal code.<sup>12</sup> Shibata Jun argues that

---

<sup>9</sup> Unoda Shōya, "Jusha," 16.

<sup>10</sup> Kōjirō Yoshikawa, *Jinsai Sorai Norinaga : Three Classical Philologists of Mid-Tokugawa Japan*, trans. Kikuchi Yūji (Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 1983), 108.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Hideo Yamashita, "The Early Life and Thought of Itō Jinsai," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 2 (1983): 457.

<sup>12</sup> Nakai, "The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism," 157.

the sporadic adoptions of Neo-Confucianism by individual minds at different degrees and depths caused the rise of Neo-Confucianism in the Tokugawa period.<sup>13</sup>

However, it is problematic to prove the hypothesis that Neo-Confucian codes penetrated into the Tokugawa people's daily life and morality. Suzuki Shōzan (1579-1655), a Sōtō Zen monk and former samurai who had fought for Tokugawa Ieyasu, stated that he found several signs of the continuing Buddhist influence in Tokugawa society, including profitable sales of Buddhist texts.<sup>14</sup> This reveals that the popularity of Buddhism and its texts was much greater than the counterpart of Neo-Confucianism. In addition, most samurai were not interested in scholarship and even condemned the people associated with Confucian scholarship. For instance, Nakae Tōju stated that a Zen monk from Kyoto, who visited Iyo Ōzu in 1624 to lecture concerning the *Analects*, lamented that the custom in Ōzu only respected military skills and condemned scholarship as the culture for cowards.<sup>15</sup> Tōju, a former samurai himself, had to read Confucian texts at night to avoid criticism from other samurai.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, in terms of ethics in daily life, Confucian teachings also conflicted with several Japanese indigenous ethical codes. The relationship between parents and children was one of the examples of the problem. According to Zhu Xi, parents and children are connected through blood, hence they are supposed to automatically love and follow each

---

<sup>13</sup> Shibata Jun, *Shisōshi ni okeru kinsei*, 183.

<sup>14</sup> Suzuki Tesshin, ed. *Suzuki Shōzan dōjin zenshū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1962), 324.

<sup>15</sup> Bitō Masahide, "Tōju sensei nenpu," 286-87.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 287.

other in a bond that no one could affect.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese family system was based on this ethical agreement, but the Japanese counterpart was founded on a different idea. Watanabe argues that the Japanese family system based on *ie* resembled a business unit; a cooperative body. Thus, the relationship between parents and children could be compromised for the best interest of *ie*.<sup>18</sup> For example, a father, the head of *ie*, could negate the relationship with his son if the son was not qualified to succeed the family business. Legal regulations supported this decision.<sup>19</sup> In this sense, Ishida Baigan (1685-1744) an ethicist stated as follows.

Here a man who was adopted by a certain family. If his biological father killed his foster father, then should he kill his biological father to avenge his foster father? If I was asked to answer to this question, then I will answer that he should kill and behead his biological father and present the head to the foster father's grave.<sup>20</sup>

This statement shows that the current status of affiliation was more important than the biological lineage to Japanese family system, and this keenly conflicts with the conventional definition of the relationship of parents and children in Confucianism. In *Mencius*, one student of Mencius asked what Shun should do if his father committed the crime of homicide. Mencius replied that Shun would abandon his all prestige in the world

---

<sup>17</sup> Zhu Xi, *Mōshi wakumon Daigaku wakumon Chūyō wakumon*, ed. Okada Takehiko (Kyoto: Chūbun Shuppansha, 1977), 42.

<sup>18</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to sōgaku*, 118-19.

<sup>19</sup> Nakada Kaoru, *Hoseishi ronshū*, vol. 1 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1936), 403

<sup>20</sup> Ishida Baigan, *Ishida Baigan zenshū*, ed. Shibata Minoru, vol. 1 (Osaka: Seibundō Shuppan, 1972), 251.

and run away with his father to enjoy a private life together.<sup>21</sup> Mencius' reply implies that the father-son relationship in the Confucian context transcends the legal order of a country even if it is associated with a significant crime. Baigan was born in 124 years later than Seika. His statement shows that Confucian ethics did not penetrate into Japanese customs even a century after the emergence of the first self-proclaimed Neo-Confucianist.

### **Neo-Confucianists on a Political Horizon**

Then, how can we understand the expansion of the Neo-Confucian population without the spread of Confucian values? We can find a clue in the relationship between Tokugawa politics and Neo-Confucian scholars in the early Tokugawa period. In fact, it would be no exaggeration, in terms of the political patronage, to say that the Tokugawa period was the golden age for Neo-Confucianism in Japan. Not only Tokugawa Ieyasu, founder of the Tokugawa shogunate, but many leaders in both shogunal and domain politics recruited Neo-Confucian scholars to handle intellectual and literary services required for governance.

Ieyasu asked Fujiwara Seika (1561-1619) who was assumed as the first Neo-Confucian scholar in Japan to lecture for him and his vassals several times and later hired Hayashi Razan (1583-1657), another Neo-Confucian scholar as a full-time intellectual assistant in the shogunate.

The 5<sup>th</sup> shogun, Tsunayoshi (1646-1709) hired Confucian scholars such as Kinoshita Jun'an (1621-1698), and built Yushima Seidō, the great Confucian shrine at Kanda. He also converted a private academy run by Razan's family into Shōhei School, an official institute

---

<sup>21</sup> Takeuchi Yoshio, *Mōshi* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1928), 76.

and appointed Hayashi Hōkō (1645-1732), a grandson of Razan, to the post of *daigaku no kami* (head of the Shōhei School) until the shogunate took it over in 1797. No other previous periods were able to witness this obvious rise of Confucian scholarship than the time of the Tokugawa era.

Anyone familiar with the intellectual history of Japan would immediately realize that this employment of professional Neo-Confucianists by the shogunate was unknown prior to the Tokugawa period because, as we already discussed, Japanese politics had kept a close relationship with Buddhism. Due to this political relationship, it was easy for Zen monks to participate in Japanese politics. In addition, Zen monks' mastery of Chinese literature and Confucian lore attracted the shogunate to recruit monks to support the intellectual side of governance, and this helped Zen Buddhism to strengthen its secular influence. Kuroda Toshio called this political arrangement the *kenmon taisei* (system of ruling blocs), and argued that this political troika system led by samurai, aristocrats, and the religious institutions lasted for a long time.<sup>22</sup>

The Tokugawa shogunate continued the tradition of recruiting Zen monks for their intellectual skills. Ieyasu recruited Seishō Jōtai (1548-1608) and Reizan (? - ?), respectively the abbots of Shōkokuji and Nanzenji, as his major intellectual advisors. Both Nanzenji and Shōkokuji were prestigious temples, ranked first and second in the Kyōto Gozan, and many junior monks worked as assistants in the shogunate. When Razan was first hired, he was no more than an assistant to Ishin Sūden (1569-1633), Reizan's successor at Nanzenji, who in 1608 succeeded Seishō Jōtai in Ieyasu's service. Rinzai Zen monks were the majority in the

---

<sup>22</sup> Kuroda, "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law:" 274.

intellectual sphere of shogunal politics, and their most important services were not in the realm of Buddhism, but in their mastery of Sinological and Confucian knowledge.

Concerning this history, the increasing employment of exclusive Confucianists with no connections to Buddhist institutions was a novel and unconventional event which broke the long tradition of the cooperation between Japanese politics and Rinzai Zen Buddhism. Most of these Confucianists dealt mainly with the composition of official documents, editing historical records, and educating junior samurai, but some of them had a chance to take part in politics. For instance, Ogyū Sorai's famous work *Seidan* was a collection of his political opinions and critiques that he submitted in response to a request from the eighth shogun, Yoshimune. Nakai Chikuzan (1730-1804), the head of the Kaitokudō the Confucian academy in Osaka also had submitted the treatise entitled *Sōbō Kigen* including his political opinions to Matsudaira Sadanobu (1759-1829) a chief councilor and actually was invited to Kyoto by Sadanobu in Kyoto to solicit to his political opinions.<sup>23</sup> This signifies that Confucianism established a stronger bond with politics that it had never experienced.

The trend of recruiting Neo-Confucian scholars was not confined to the upper levels of the shogunate. Collateral members of the Tokugawa clan, as well as daimyos around the country, hired Confucian scholars as their intellectual advisors as well. Tokugawa Yoshinao (1601-1650), the lord of Owari, hired Hori Kyōan (1585-1643). Yoshinao was famous as an early advocate of Neo-Confucianism. Under his sponsorship, Kyōan joined the bakufu publishing project *Kan'ei Shokakeizuden* (*The Genealogy of Warrior Houses in*

---

<sup>23</sup> Tetsuo Najita, *Vision of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: the Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 171.



*the Kan'ei Period*), and his sons also worked for Hiroshima and Nagoya domains as a Neo-Confucian scholar working for a domain. Tokugawa Yorinobu (1602-1671), the lord of Kii, hired Naba Kassho (1595-1648) and Nagata Zensai (1597-1664), both of whom had studied with Fujiwara Seika. Yorinobu granted Kassho a stipend 500 *koku*, which was unusually high for a Confucian scholar, and supported Zensai by building a lecture hall in the domain to educate samurai. Tokugawa Yorifusa (1603-1661) of Mito hired Hitomi Bokuyū (1599-1670), another student of Hayashi Razan.

Provincial daimyo also employed Confucianists. Katō Kiyomasa (1562-1611) of Higo domain hired Emura Sensai (1565-1664), and Hoshina Masayuki (1611-1673) of Aizu, half-brother of the third shogun, hired Yamazaki Ansai (1619-1682) a devoted Neo-Confucian philosopher. Ansai contributed to the governance of Aizu as an advisor and reorganized Shintoism from the perspective of Neo-Confucianism. Tsushima domain hired Amenomori Hōshū (1668-1755), who had studied with Kinoshita Jun'an, to handle diplomatic business between Tsushima and Chosŏn Korea. Yonezawa domain hired Yaoita San'in (1640-1705, who had studied with Matsunaga Sekigo (1592-1657), a student of Seika. Not only these domains but also many other domains hired Neo-Confucian scholars and these facts apparently imply that the samurai leaders in the Tokugawa period paid attention to Neo-Confucian scholars.

Ikeda Mitsumasa (1609-1682) of Okayama hired Kumazawa Banzan (1619-1691). It is said that Mitsumasa was personally inclined towards the doctrine of Wang Yangming and hired Banzan due to his academic background, which included teachers like Nakae Tōju (1608-1648), known as the pioneer of the Wang Yangming School in Japan. Mitsumasa paid 3000 *koku*, Banzan's stipend. This amount was much more than other

samurai's salary in the domain.<sup>24</sup> Banzan contributed to education in Okayama domain. In 1651, he drafted the regulations of Hanazonokai which became Shizutani Gakkō known as the first public institute managed by the Okayama domain for the education of commoners in Japan.

The recruitment of Confucian scholars continued to the middle of the Tokugawa period. Yanagisawa Yoshiyasu (1658-1714), a *fudai* daimyo who served the fifth shogun, Tsunayoshi, as chamberlain, hired Ogyū Sorai (1666-1728) the most prominent Confucianist of the time. The end of major warfare since the unification of Japan under Tokugawa rule meant that samurai were no longer able to demonstrate martial valor, contributing to the shift in their identity from soldier to something more suitable for a peaceful time. Local domains built schools to educate them, and the recruitment of Confucian scholars was a response to the demand for more intellectuals to manage this business. In any case, this new linkage between Japanese politics and Confucian scholars caused the Tokugawa period to be seen as the genesis of Confucianism in Japan.

The widespread recruitment of Neo-Confucian scholars is an important event for Japanese intellectual history because it directly triggered the emergence of Neo-Confucianism as one of the major intellectual traditions in early modern Japan. Previous scholars have interpreted the increasing employment of Neo-Confucianists by political leaders as a signal of the change of power dynamics in the ideological sphere of the shogunate, and concluded that this rise of Confucian scholarship is greatly due to the appeal of Neo-Confucianism. They have believed that the Tokugawa regime adopted Neo-

---

<sup>24</sup> Gotō Yōichi, "Kumazawa Banzan no shōgai to shisō keisei," in *Kumazawa Banzan*, ed. Gotō Yōichi and Tomoeda Ryūtarō, NST, vol. 30 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971), 480.

Confucianism as the state ideology, and that this propelled the widespread recruitment of Neo-Confucian scholars. They have interpreted the employment of Neo-Confucian scholars by the shogunate, not merely as a sign of the change in intellectual power dynamics, but as the adoption of Neo-Confucianism itself as the official ideology of the shogunate itself.

Inoue Tetsujirō (1856-1944), a German trained philosopher and the first Japanese professor of philosophy at Tokyo Imperial University, argued that Neo-Confucianism had functioned as the educational orthodoxy of Tokugawa Japan and greatly contributed to the formulation of Japanese people's moral conceptions.<sup>25</sup> Nishimura Tenshū (1865-1924) stated that Neo-Confucianism had functioned as the state ideology of the Tokugawa shogunate from the beginning of the Tokugawa period.<sup>26</sup>

This assumption that Neo-Confucianism was the official Tokugawa ideology spread after Maruyama Masao published his magnum opus, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*, in 1952, and this inference was transformed into the standard interpretation of the role of Neo-Confucianism in early modern Japan.

Maruyama suggested that Tokugawa Japan adopted Neo-Confucian philosophy as the state ideology to stabilize the newly-unified Japan after the turbulence of the Sengoku period, and that Neo-Confucianism was well-suited to satisfy that need. He compared Tokugawa Japan to China during the Han dynasty, when China was reunified after the Chin dynasty and adopted Confucianism as the official state learning. He assumed that the socio-political situation of early Tokugawa society resembled that of the Han and that thus this

---

<sup>25</sup> Inoue Tetsujirō, *Nihon Shushigaku-ha no tetsugaku* (Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1905), 275.

<sup>26</sup> Nishimura Tenshū, *Nihon Sōgaku-shi* (Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1951), 191.

circumstance led Tokugawa Japan to adopt Neo-Confucianism, which was the most dominant ideology as well as scholarship in the East Asian world during that period as the major philosophical and political ideology just like the Han did.<sup>27</sup>

Maruyama also positioned Neo-Confucianism as the metaphysical symbol of medieval feudalism and even believed that Neo-Confucianism emerged as a universalistic way of thinking in the early modern Japan.<sup>28</sup> His major purpose in this work was to discover the seeds of Japanese modernization, a Hegelian process in his view, which he deduced from later intellectual traditions attempting to overcome the Neo-Confucian paradigm, especially the Sorai School.<sup>29</sup>

Maruyama's argument on the connection between Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa politics seemed quite plausible at the time, and drove later scholars to accept the view that Neo-Confucianism was the state ideology of Tokugawa Japan. Ishida Ichirō was one of those scholars who followed Maruyama's theory, arguing that there had been several ideologies, such as Buddhism and Shintoism, in samurai society, and that Neo-Confucianism newly joined the league of major ideologies at the beginning of the

---

<sup>27</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*, 29-30.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

<sup>29</sup> Sorai and the members of his school were famous for their original interpretations of Confucian classics by rejecting Zhu Xi's orthodoxy, and their scholarship was called *Kobunjigaku* (Ancient Textual Study), Kiri Paramore, "Confucianism Versus Feudalism: The Shōheizaka Academy and Late Tokugawa Reform," in *Uncharted Waters: Intellectual Life in the Edo Period, Essays in Honour of W.J. Boot*, ed. Anna Beerens and Mark Teeuwen (Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2012), 84-86.

Tokugawa shogunate. According to Ishida each ideology had a specific function, and Neo-Confucianism played a role to persuade people to conform to the feudal social order.<sup>30</sup>

The logic arguing that the Tokugawa shogunate adopted Neo-Confucianism to utilize it as the state ideology implies that there were the intellectuals in the top part of the Tokugawa politics, who had enough culture and understanding of Neo-Confucianism to draw a blueprint of a Neo-Confucian country. When the Han dynasty adopted Confucianism, the emperor Wu was with Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE), a prominent Confucianist. Yi Sŏnggye (1335-1408), the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty of Korea, cooperated with Neo-Confucian scholars when he overthrew the Koryŏ dynasty. In both cases, the leaders themselves did not have Confucian knowledge, but Confucianists surrounding the leaders persuaded them to accept Confucianism as the state orthodoxy by offering intellectual functions to justify and fortify the leaders' authority.

The logic arguing that the Tokugawa shogunate adopted Neo-Confucianism to utilize it as the state ideology implies that there were intellectuals in the upper reaches of the Tokugawa politics who had enough education and understanding of Neo-Confucianism to draw a blueprint of a Neo-Confucian country. When the Han dynasty adopted Confucianism, Emperor Wu (r. 141-87 BCE) had the counsel of Dong Zhongshu (179-104 BCE), a prominent Confucianist. Similarly, Yi Sŏnggye (1335-1408), the founder of the Chosŏn dynasty in Korea, had the support of Neo-Confucian scholars when he overthrew the Koryŏ dynasty, and gave them a prominent place in his administration. In both cases,

---

<sup>30</sup> Ishida Ichirō, "Zenki bakufu taisei no ideorogi to Shushigaku-ha no shisō," in *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, ed. Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, NST, vol. 29 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975), 446.

the leaders themselves did not have Confucian knowledge, but Confucianists surrounding the leaders persuaded them to accept Confucianism as the state orthodoxy by offering intellectual functions to justify and fortify the leaders' authority. Meanwhile, there were no Confucian scholars who persuaded the leaders of the Tokugawa shogunate to adopt Neo-Confucianism. At the outset Ieyasu's intellectual advisers were all Zen monks; he only began to employ professed, exclusive Neo-Confucian scholars only after the shogunate was established. Thus, the pointer is directed to Tokugawa Ieyasu as the person who was interested in Confucianism as a political ideology. According to Honda Tadakatsu (1548-1610), one of Ieyasu's leading vassals, Ieyasu once stated:

I enjoy listening to my intellectual assistants' reading books. I think the people who govern the country should learn the Four Books. If they do not have time to cover all Four Books, they need to at least peruse *Mencius*.<sup>31</sup>

It seems unusual that a samurai who went through the warfare of Sengoku period mentioned the Four Books. Among Four Books, *Mencius* is famous for its political philosophy based on Confucian idealism. Honda's quote suggesting that Ieyasu specifically recommended *Mencius* as the bible to his men may suggest the image that Ieyasu had a special interest and knowledge in Confucianism. The *Tokugawa jikki*, compiled 200 years after Honda's statement, also depicts Ieyasu as a warrior who especially loved humanistic scholarship.

Although the lord conquered the realm on horseback [through military power],  
he had the innate qualities of a sage and understood the truth that one could not

---

<sup>31</sup> Honda Heihachirō, "Honda Heihachirō kiki-gaki," in *Kinsei seidō-ron*, ed. Naramoto Tatsuya, NST, vol. 38 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976), 27.

govern on horseback. He always revered the way of the sages, and had the great insight to realize that there was no other way to govern the realm than by following the Way of humanity.<sup>32</sup>

Ieyasu was not the mere founding father of the Tokugawa shogunate. After his death he was worshiped as a divinity by later shoguns, and thus his political legacy had a special authority in shogunal politics. Previous scholarship argues that later shoguns continued Ieyasu's respect for Confucian scholarship and that this helped to establish the position of Neo-Confucianism as state ideology. When Hidetada, the second shogun, issued the *Buke shohatto* (Laws for the Military Houses, 1615) regulating the conduct of the daimyos, the first article read, "One must wholly devote oneself to the civil and the military arts and to the Way of the bow and the horse."<sup>33</sup> This edict also has a special remark, "To have the civil on the left and the military on the right is the ancient practice. One must be equipped with both."<sup>34</sup> Although issued in the name of Hidetada, the *Buke shohatto* was Ieyasu's brainchild, was drafted for him by Ishin Sūden, his most trusted intellectual assistant.

Modern scholars emphasize this section of the edict because they believe it indicates that the change of samurai culture at the dawn of the early modern period emphasized the significance of humanistic knowledge, and that Ieyasu's personal interest in Neo-Confucianism affected the intellectual convention in the shogunate and daimyo domains,

---

<sup>32</sup> *Tōshōgū gyojikki furoku*, 339.

<sup>33</sup> de Bary, Gluck, and Tiedemann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition: 1600 to 2000*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

interpreting the recruitment of Razan as Ieyasu's intent to connect Neo-Confucianism to Japanese politics.

Then, why did Ieyasu concern himself with supporting Neo-Confucianism? Sagara Tōru, one of the major Japanese scholars who has written on this issue, argues that, while the traditional political power in Japan such as emperors had pursued an ideology that justified their political authority based on myth, the shogun's power was not ideologically justified in the same way as the emperor's power. The shogunate regarded Neo-Confucianism as a tool for asserting political legitimacy. In short, Sagara argues that Ieyasu's interest in Neo-Confucian scholarship came from his internal need to the qualities of ruler. He even added that the rise of Neo-Confucianism was the historical fate that the samurai class had wanted for a long time.<sup>35</sup>

The imperial court in Japan had attempted to connect its authority to the mythological power of Amaterasu the Sun goddess. In Japanese myth, Jinmu, the legendary first emperor, built his kingdom in the land of Yamato by the guidance of *Yatagarasu*, the sunbird sent by Amaterasu, and this Yamato State was the origin of the Japanese kingdom. Samurai who obtained political power by violence did not have this kind of mythic bolster. Thus, Sagara believed, the Confucian examples of sage kings who acquired a ruler's quality by individual effort and self-cultivation could be an alternative option for samurai to legitimize their power. The *Buke shohatto* stated, in the article 13, that "The lord of a province should select those who have talent and ability for the tasks of government."<sup>36</sup>

---

<sup>35</sup> Sagara Tōru, *Nihon no Jukyō*, 1:18.

<sup>36</sup> de Bary, Gluck, and Tiedemann, *Sources of Japanese Tradition: 1600 to 2000*, 14.



This notion of the ability of ruler is also found in a legal and ideological document determining shogunal politics of the previous shogunate. In the *Kenmu Code* (*Kenmu shikimoku*), promulgated under the first Ashikaga shogun in 1336, we can find the same verdict as the above one. This implies that higher ranked samurai indeed regarded themselves as rulers and wanted to portray themselves in such a way, and Sagara believed that Neo-Confucianism provided samurai with a metaphysical instrument to pursue it and samurai accessed Neo-Confucianism to foster this ruler quality. In other words, Sagara argues that Ieyasu's interest in the Neo-Confucian scholarship came from his internal struggles to define his own quality as a ruler. He even added that the rise of Neo-Confucianism was the historical fate that the samurai class had wanted for a long time.<sup>37</sup>

This state ideology framework has long enjoyed the position as an axiomatic theory and has urged modern scholars to accept the increasing employment of Confucianists in Tokugawa politics as the sign of the triumph of Neo-Confucian philosophy over Buddhism in all of Japanese society. In addition, the scholarly roots of these Confucianists who worked for the central and domainal authorities mostly came from Fujiwara Seika, who is posited as the first self-proclaimed Neo-Confucianist to convert from Zen Buddhism. All of these facts seem to indicate that Neo-Confucianism arose by stepping on Buddhism. In this sense, Maeda Ichirō suggests that the rationalism character of Neo-Confucianism deconstructed the traditional worldview of Buddhism and, as a result, contributed to the stabilization of the new feudal system of Tokugawa society.<sup>38</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> Sagara Tōru, *Nihon no Jukyō*, 1: 18.

<sup>38</sup> Maeda Ichirō, *Nihon kinsei shisōshi kenkyū* (Tokyo: Bun'ichi Sōgō Shuppan, 1980), 39.

However, this ‘axiom’ was greatly challenged beginning in the middle of the 1980s. Watanabe Hiroshi, who was a student of Maruyama, has fostered an idea different from his teacher’s. While Maruyama believed that Neo-Confucian logic had dominated the way of thinking of the people since the beginning of the Tokugawa period, Watanabe deemphasizes theories concerning state ideology. He asserts that Neo-Confucianism neither served as the state ideology nor dominated the way of thinking in Tokugawa society because the Tokugawa government did not establish institutions based on Confucianism, such as Confucian rituals and the civil service examination.<sup>39</sup>

Maruyama’s entire argument stood on the premise that Neo-Confucianism was already established as the powerful orthodoxy from the beginning of the Tokugawa period. However, Watanabe disputes this point. Similar perspectives also came from Euro-American academia. Jan Boot argues that the assumption suggesting that compatibility existed between the Chinese society dominated by Neo-Confucianism and socio-political structure of Tokugawa Japan is wrong.

Such a “compatibility,” however, did not exist. The feudal society that developed in Japan was quite different from that of China, both the contemporary China and that of Chou or Sung times. The other argument, namely that Neo-Confucianism was “used” because it favors the preservation of the status quo, is also not valid. Neo-Confucianism is primarily concerned with the ends and means of individual self-cultivation, and its most important political demand is that administrative offices be filled with those who have succeeded in cultivating

---

<sup>39</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*, 27-29.

themselves. Depending on the circumstances, this can become a highly explosive doctrine.<sup>40</sup>

Boot argues the significance of the civil service examination in Neo-Confucianism and then implies that Neo-Confucianism did not work as the dominant ideology in Japan because they did not have the examination system. With the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, the actual role of samurai was changed from warriors to officials. This may seem similar to the Chinese and Korean cases, where the basis of political system was supported by scholar-officials. However, most Japanese official positions were hereditary, while the Chinese and Korean counterparts were selected through examinations testing Neo-Confucian knowledge. This was the biggest difference that Boot points out.

Another counterargument challenging the state ideology perspective comes from the issue concerning the attempts of Ieyasu and later shoguns to legitimize their authority by using the examples of Confucian sage kings. Karen Gerhart presents an interesting case. In 1634, the third shogun Iemitsu stopped by Nagoya Castle on his way to Kyōto. To welcome this important visitor the daimyo, Iemitsu's uncle, Tokugawa Yoshinao, commissioned Kano Tan'yū(1602-1674), the principal shogunal artist, to draw a large painting on the wall and the doors of the bedroom for Iemitsu. The purpose of this painting was to visualize the authority of the shogun. The theme of this painting was based on stories from the Chinese text *Dijiantushuo* (in Japanese, *Teikanzusetsu*).<sup>41</sup>

---

<sup>40</sup> Boot, "The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan," 2.

<sup>41</sup> Karen M. Gerhart, "Tokugawa Authority and Chinese Exemplars: The Teikan Zusetsu Murals of Nagoya Castle," *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 1 (1997): 1.

*Dijiantushuo* is a Ming dynasty collection of events in the lives of Chinese emperors written from the Confucian perspective. This work was initially introduced to Japan during Hideyoshi's campaign to Korea and reprinted in Japan in an illustrated edition by the order of Toyotomi Hideyori.<sup>42</sup> Gerhart argues that Tan'yū composed his work based on illustrations in the *Dijiantushuo* because he knew that the shogunate would like to use exemplars of Chinese emperors. However, she suspects that only an extremely small group of Tokugawa leaders really understood the meaning and lessons of *Dijian Tushuo*, and concludes that this painting worked for the Tokugawa shogunate for the following reasons.

Sometimes the association with China was enough to give a text, philosophy, or art subject a patina of respectability, fashion, and high class. The Japanese imperial family has historically cloaked its image in ritual literature and art from China. It is not surprising that the Tokugawa shogunate attempted to do likewise.<sup>43</sup>

In Confucian politics, the authority of the ruler was established by asserting the moral similarity of contemporary rulers and the sage kings in the antiquity. However, later Tokugawa Shogun usually relied on *go-ikō* (prestige or awesomeness) based on the strength and power of the Tokugawa clan to display their authority. Bitō Masahide argues that the Tokugawa shogunate was not interested in justifying its political authority by Neo-Confucianism because Ieyasu already successfully established the authority of the shogunate by taking advantage of the situation created by the separation of samurai and

---

<sup>42</sup> K. B Gardner, "Two Early Printed Book from Japan," *The British Museum Quarterly* 22, no. 1/2 (1960): 18.

<sup>43</sup> Gerhart, 29.

peasants.<sup>44</sup> Hongō Takamori criticizes Maruyama by borrowing Bitō's opinion and concludes that the conventional theoretical premise that Neo-Confucianism was the universal ideology controlling Tokugawa society is unconvincing when we discuss the intellectual history of Japan in the Tokugawa period.<sup>45</sup>

The shogunate strengthened Ieyasu's authority even after his death by worshipping him as a god, *Tōshō Daigongen*. This deity was a combination of Buddhism and Shintoism. Neither of them was related to Confucian teachings.<sup>46</sup>

Tsunayoshi was a unique shogun who directly utilized Neo-Confucian scholarship to emphasize his authority as a shogun. He understood the Confucian classics and sometimes lectured about those texts to his vassals in person.<sup>47</sup> He also built Yushima Seidō, the grand shrine for Confucius in Kanda. As seen above, Tsunayoshi seemed to build this shrine to pay his respect to Confucius and Confucianism. Due to these facts, he had been accepted as the symbol of the close relationship between Neo-Confucianism and the Tokugawa shogunate. Suzuki Miyao argues that the shogun Tsunayoshi first suggested building Yushima Seidō himself because he was a pro-Confucianism shogun.<sup>48</sup>

However, the story behind the building of Yushima Seidō reveals that Tsunayoshi did not believe in Confucius' lessons as his ethical creed even if he loved reading the classics.

---

<sup>44</sup> Bitō Masahide, *Edo jidai towa nanika: Nihonshi-jō no kinsei to kindai* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992), 43.

<sup>45</sup> Hongō Takamori and Fukaya Katsumi, *Kinsei shisō-ron*, 37-39.

<sup>46</sup> Sonehara Satoshi, *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō: Tōshōgū to gongen-sama*, 57-60.

<sup>47</sup> Bodart-Bailey, *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*, 214.

<sup>48</sup> Suzuki Miyao, *Seidō monogatari: Yushima Seidō ryakushi* (Tokyo: Shibunkai, 1989), 8.

According to Muro Kyūsō (1658-1734), there was a rumor that Hayashi Nobuatsu (1618-1688) had suggested that the shogun Tsunayoshi build this shrine so that Confucius' spiritual power would help allay Tsunayoshi's fears pertaining to infertility.<sup>49</sup>

A Confucian shrine built by the government had functioned as an official institution to symbolize Confucian authority over state orthodoxy elsewhere in the East Asian world, especially in China and Korea. However, the actual purpose of establishing this shrine in Japan concerned quite a different meaning from its counterparts in China and Korea. In fact, the Yushima Seidō has a unique facility that we cannot find in China or Korea. It is the small shrine to Shennong, one of three legendary emperors in Chinese myth worshiped as a god of medicine and agriculture. The statue of Shennong was created in 1640 by the order of Iemitsu (1604-1651) for the Zōshigaya Yakuen, a medicinal herb farm that was later moved to Yushima Seidō in 1698. From this, we may tentatively infer that Tsunayoshi and the shogunate built Yushima Seidō for reasons pertaining to medical beliefs.

The Kansei Proscription of Heterodoxy (1790) is another example. According to this edict, Neo-Confucianism was the most sincere scholarship that had been trusted since Ieyasu's reign. Thus the government encouraged the people to learn Neo-Confucian scholarship, especially Zhu Xi's teachings, and should select officials from people who had enough knowledge of Zhu Xi's teachings. It is said that some scholars opposed to Neo-Confucianism encountered trouble due to this edict. Some local Confucianists who opposed Zhu Xi's teachings also encountered financial difficulties because the number of students decreased after this edict was issued. However, it did not intervene in other Confucian

---

<sup>49</sup> Muro Kyūsō, *Kenzan hisaku*, NKS, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Sōsho Kankōkai, 1923), 277.

scholars' anti-Zhu Xi scholarship. In other words, the reality of the Kansei Proscription shows that Neo-Confucianism was not in a position of state orthodoxy in Tokugawa politics.

Kurozumi Makoto offers arguments that the unprivileged position of Japanese Confucianism can be clearly shown by the fact that Confucian rituals which had significantly affected individuals and communities, such as the Heaven and ancestor worship, were not established in Japan.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, Ooms concludes:

The previous analysis shows that the early bakufu under the first four shoguns did not respond to Neo-Confucianism: there existed neither privileged institutional support for it, nor any directives from above for the imposition of a well-formulated ideology. This however, does not preclude the existence of more limited legitimation efforts by the new rulers to justify their newly acquired position of domination, nor does it disprove the existence of an ideology, along lines spelled out by Gramsci, as an epistemological construct produced by the private initiative of auxiliary groups to the political governing elite. Such a construct enables the ruling class to reduce its reliance on coercive power and instead to exercise a hegemonic rule which entails not only political domination but also moral and cultural leadership facilitating that domination.<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>50</sup> Kurozumi, "Introduction to "the Nature of Early Tokugawa Confucianism": " 340.

<sup>51</sup> Herman Ooms, "Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem," in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 36.

These accounts reveal that approaching ‘Neo-Confucianism’ in seventeenth-century Japan through the lens of state ideology exaggerates the actual influence of Neo-Confucianism on Japanese politics. That is to say, it is true that Confucianists had a close relationship with politics during the Tokugawa period, and that their political importance may have grown over time, but the depth of each relationship was arbitrary, and seems to have depended more on the personalities of both the individual Confucianists and their political patrons than it did on the institutional status of Neo-Confucianism as an established ideology.

It is hard to say that Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism dominated all of Japan even if it had much better opportunities from the beginning of the Tokugawa period. While later research argues that Neo-Confucianism did not serve as the state ideology of Tokugawa Japan, some questions still remain. What was the state ideology of Japan if it was not Neo-Confucianism? How can we explain the obvious increasing employment of Confucianists in both central and provincial politics? With the collapse of the ideological paradigm, this explanation disintegrates and we need to return to the issue anew.

### **Scholarship as Intellectual Commodity**

It seems notable that Ieyasu, a warrior who had lived in the bloody time of the Sengoku period, knew about classical Chinese literature. The *Tokugawa jikki* describes Ieyasu as a leader of special qualities, different from other typical samurai. Ieyasu’s invitation of Fujiwara Seika to lecture to him has been regarded as evidence of Ieyasu’s special interest in Confucianism, but we should pay attention to theme of the lecture. For Seika mainly gave lectures of *Essentials of Government of the Zhenguan Period*, a famous



Chinese political text for rulers written in the Tang period, rather than Confucian philosophical texts such as Four Books or Five Canons. John Tucker argues that Ieyasu preferred *Mencius* because the logic in that book justified Ieyasu's rebellion against the Toyotomi clan, the family of Ieyasu's former master. Mencius stated that it was not a crime for a vassal to overthrow an evil ruler who lost the trust of the people, and this attracted Ieyasu.<sup>52</sup> Although Tucker uses this account to suggest that Ieyasu followed Confucian lessons, this actually reveals that Ieyasu selectively used examples from Chinese history to support his own agenda. We already saw Ieyasu's reason for hiring Razan, revealing his interest in encyclopedic knowledge of Chinese culture and history, and we can assume that Ieyasu invited Neo-Confucian scholars to supply literary information for political purposes rather than for teaching Neo-Confucian philosophy itself. This implies that Ieyasu's interest in scholarship was not closely related to his interest in Confucian values.

In this regard, it is hard to say that Ieyasu was the only samurai who showed interest in scholarship. There were several precedents showing that samurai utilized scholarship for certain purposes. Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1537-98), who unified Japan, came from a poor peasant family and was obviously uneducated and illiterate, but it is said that he kept a coterie of over 800 *otogishū* (protégé specialized in culture or scholarship) from diverse social and intellectual backgrounds to gather information from them. Of course, nobody actually counted the number of Hideyoshi's protégés and old Japanese habitually use the digit eight to describe large numbers. Therefore, It is not certain if he actually had 800

---

<sup>52</sup> John Allen Tucker, "Two Mencian Political Notions in Tokugawa Japan," *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 2 (1997): 237-38.

*otogishū*, but this shows even uneducated Hideyoshi felt the need for intellectual and scholarly service and it urged him to have a big group of *literati*.

According to Pak Tongnyang, the Korean ambassador Kim Sŏng'il who met Hideyoshi in 1590, evaluated him as an ignorant and vulgar dictator.<sup>53</sup> Kim's criticism on Hideyoshi was natural as Korean ambassador who was a scholar-official selected for office through the civil service examination, because for Neo-Confucian scholars, studying was a means to cultivate oneself, and a ruler's intellectual level indicated the quality as a leader. In the East Asian world, especially by the time of Tokugawa Ieyasu, Confucianism was unquestionably the major focus of scholarship, and understanding Confucian scholarship was regarded as one of the most significant qualifications of a leader.

In the Confucian notion, scholarship usually referred to learning Confucian philosophy. One's degree of understanding of Confucian philosophy determined one's ethical quality, and the superior moral character based on that ethical quality was considered the qualifying characteristic of a ruler. In Chosŏn-Korea, there were Confucian lectures and discussion sessions for the King at the court, the so-called *kyōngyŏn*. In short, the sessions taught the curriculum of Confucian scholarship, and Korean kings were forced to attend the sessions to study it. Kim Tewan argues that the goal of *kyōngyŏn* aimed to develop the quality of a king similar to the ancient sages and the kings who earned a good reputation in history actually received good grades in the sessions.<sup>54</sup> There is no guarantee

---

<sup>53</sup> Pak Tongnyang, "Kije sacho," accessed August 18, 2010, DKC, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcdb/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc\\_mk\\_a019&gunchalId=av001&finId=001&startOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_a019\\_av001\\_001&endOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_a019\\_av001\\_001](http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcdb/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc_mk_a019&gunchalId=av001&finId=001&startOrgnText=kc_ko_a019_av001_001&endOrgnText=kc_ko_a019_av001_001)

<sup>54</sup> Kim Tewan, *Kyōngyŏn: wang ūi kongbu* (Seoul: Yōksa Bipyōng-sa, 2011), 187-203.

that Confucianism really helped the kings to be sages, but we can at least see what Koreans of that time expected from Confucianism through this system. In this sense, reading and writing skills, which enabled direct access to Confucian scholarship, were the most essential elements of a ruler's intellectual ability.

On the other hand, Japanese samurai rulers, including Hideyoshi, had different ideas. Many Sengoku-era samurai were illiterate, but this does not mean that all of them were ignorant or foolish. Scholarship was important and necessary for samurai leaders even prior to Ieyasu's time, as well, but the conception and the format of scholarship for samurai was quite different from that of Chinese or Korean leaders. For samurai, scholarship meant acquiring practical information rather than self-cultivation and thus becoming informed was more important than being cultivated. As long as they had their own ways to obtain knowledge and information, literacy level was an insignificant matter.

In early modern Japan, people evaluated the quality of leaders not by invisible morality but by apparent achievement. Thus, leaders of ability employed all sorts of methods for victory. This tradition probably came from the warrior culture which had focused on results and achievements. Asakura Sōteki (1477-1555), a daimyo in the Sengoku period, asserted that the most significant virtue of a samurai was victory regardless of his reputation of character or personality.<sup>55</sup> Although Nitobe Inazo created the glamourized image of the soul of samurai with the terms of fair play and honor,<sup>56</sup> the reality of samurai was mundane and practical.

---

<sup>55</sup> Watanabe Hiroshi, *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*, 62.

<sup>56</sup> Nitobe Inazō, *Bushido: The Soul of Japan* (London: The Floating Press, 2008), 18, 70.

Even in the Tokugawa period when samurai did not need to engage in warfare, daimyo had to prove their ability by actual achievement to earn the respect of people in their territories. If not, some of them had to experience *oshikome*, literally meaning confinement and actually referring to a form of coup by their retainers. The shogunate was usually strict towards rebellions endangering samurai authority but it quietly condoned domain *oshikome* challenging a daimyo's ability. For instance, in 1729 Arima Norifusa (1674-1738), the daimyo of Kurume whose excessive taxation elicited a peasant rebellion, was supplanted by his retainer Inatsugu Masasane. Due to this incident, Norifusa was forced to yield his position to his son Yoriyuki.<sup>57</sup> Of course, this does not mean that the shogunate abandoned the hereditary principle because the daimyo post remained in Arima family, but we can see how the daimyo's ability level actually affected domain politics.

Intellectual information was one of the important methods for victory as well. In order to learn tactics and governing skill from classical texts, and to exchange diplomatic documents with other countries, they needed to record their history. Sometimes they also needed to engage in fortune telling to make the best schedule for battles.<sup>58</sup>

However, it would be inefficient for leaders to obtain all of these skills, for they were busy commanding war. Instead, they accessed scholarship in their own way. They hired intellectuals, so-called *otogishū*, who provided encyclopedic knowledge gained from

---

<sup>57</sup> Kasaya Kazuhiko, *Bushido to Nihon-gata nōryoku shugi* (Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2005), 67-8.

<sup>58</sup> Divination was one of the most significant intellectual services that *literati* should provide samurai leaders. Ashikaga Gakkō where trained Zen monks as the candidate of political assistants included *I Ching* (Book of Change) in its curriculum and many monks learned *I Ching* outside the school. See Wai-Ming Ng, *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000), 41.

studies of humanistic scholarship. In the previous quote where Honda Tadakatsu described Ieyasu's preference of *Mencius*, Ieyasu mentioned that he enjoyed listening to *otogishū*'s reading books. In fact, his word, 'listening' exactly shows how samurai leaders consumed scholarship as information. If you cannot read, you can listen to somebody who can read for you. If you do not write, you can ask someone to write on behalf of you. This was the concept of scholarship for samurai.

In this regard, Ieyasu was not that different from his predecessors on this matter. Ieyasu hired several intellectuals and utilized their knowledge and information. The description on Ieyasu in *Jikki* depicting him as a scholarship-loving conqueror is nothing but flattering rhetoric to the founder of the shogunate. The expression "conquered the world on horseback by military power" came from the anecdote of the first emperor of the Han dynasty. Lu Jia (?-?), a politician who advised Liu Bang (202-195BCE), the first emperor of the Han Dynasty, to recruit as many as intellectuals to improve governance but the emperor rejected this by saying that he obtained the world on horseback by the force, hence he did not need any help from *literati*.

On this, Lu Jia disputed that it was possible to conquer the world on horseback but impossible to rule the world on horseback. It is said that Liu Bang accepted this advice and hired intellectuals for his government. *Tokugawa jikki* simply glamorized Ieyasu as the perfect ruler who already knew how to rule the world by borrowing this Chinese anecdote. I believe his preference for *Mencius* came from nearly the same intent. In this sense, Ieyasu's interest in scholarship was not new at all.

In conclusion, the recruitment of Neo-Confucianists by the political leaders in the Tokugawa shogunate was not closely connected to the spread of Neo-Confucian values, but

rather was none other than a continuation in the conventional hiring of intellectuals who offered knowledge services for politicians. Neo-Confucian scholarship was sought as a source of information, just like previous shoguns. Prior to the emergence of the Neo-Confucianists outside the Zen monasteries, the Buddhist monks were the only available manpower pool for Tokugawa politics. However, the situation was changed during the early Tokugawa period because Neo-Confucianists free from the Zen affiliation appeared as another supplier of intellectual service in the market.

Hiring Neo-Confucian scholars was much cheaper than keeping Zen monks as protégé.<sup>59</sup> They were professional who undertook training in private Confucian schools as full-time Neo-Confucianists. They were more readily available as the number of the schools overtook the number of Zen monks. Then, why would the Tokugawa political system not to hire them as *literati*?

### **Vehicle of Social Mobility**

If a consumer is looking for intellectuals for a utilitarian purpose in a market, the intellectuals as providers should take practical measures as well. Why do economically marginalized people pursue Neo-Confucian scholarship? I believe that we should examine this issue from a more practical and utilitarian perspective because there were some who successfully utilized their knowledge of Neo-Confucianism to promote their social status.

It is generally said that there were four social status rungs in Japan: samurai, peasant, artisan, and merchant. However, this was nothing but an analogy of Chinese classification

---

<sup>59</sup> We already saw it in the comparison of the endowment for Razan's Confucian shrine and Tenkai's Kan'eiji from the shogunate.

and there was no difference, in terms of actual social influence, among peasants, artisans, and merchants. These three classes were simply the ruled commoners, and only samurai comprised the actual ruling class.<sup>60</sup> During the Sengoku period, however, the framework of this social status became loose because commoners earned opportunities to be elevated to samurai according to their military service in army. Toyotomi Hideyoshi was a great example of this, and Konishi Yukinaga (1555-1600), the feudal lord of Higo also came from a merchant family as well.

However, this fast lane of social mobility was closed after the Sengoku period ended. Since Hideyoshi issued a sword hunt (*katana gari*) in 1588 prohibiting commoners from possessing weapons, commoners were also stripped of their chance to participate in military. Katsumata Shizuo argues that even before Hideyoshi's *katana gari* there were some actions taken to separate peasants and military among a few Sengoku daimyo such as Shibata Katsuie (1522-1583).<sup>61</sup> Meanwhile, the majority of Sengoku daimyo utilized peasants as soldiers and the wholesale segregation of peasants and military occurred after Hideyoshi unified Japan. This segregation of peasants and military occurred in medieval Europe, as well.

In 1152, a peace ordinance issued by Frederick Barbarossa prohibited peasants from having knightly weapons such as the sword and the lance and proclaimed that only people

---

<sup>60</sup> Ronald P. Dore, *Education in Tokugawa Japan* (Berkeley: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965), 11.

<sup>61</sup> Katsumata Shizuo, "Sengoku-hō," in *Nihon rekishi*, ed. Ōtsu Tōru, et al. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978), 203-6.

whose ancestors had been knights would be recognized as ‘lawful knights.’<sup>62</sup> Bernad Susser argues that this separation policy mainly aimed to disarm the armed temples in Kōyasan and Nara and the peasants allied to the temples.<sup>63</sup> In this sense, Mary Elizabeth Berry suggests that this regulation was designed to increase political security by abolishment of the military recruitment of peasants, and this consequently indicated the end of the Sengoku period, a period defined by warfare supported by armed peasantry.<sup>64</sup>

Basically *katana gari* was the military policy put in place to prevent the possibility of rebellions but it also played a role in protecting the privilege of the limited ruling classes by confiscating weapons that had worked as the tool of social mobility for commoners. Consequently, the regulation divided military and peasant sectors into two different professions.

This also affected attitudes toward scholarship. Richard Rubinger argues that the separation of the peasants and warriors triggered the increase of literacy in Japan in both samurai and commoner circles. The landed samurai should enter a daimyo’s castle as vessels if they did not want to be *hyakushō* (peasants) after *katana gari* and had to live depending “on the pen more on the sword” as bureaucrats. On the other hand, the land survey paired with the regulation left more control and leadership of countryside to

---

<sup>62</sup> Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society: Social Classes and Political Organization*, trans. L. A. Manyon, vol. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1989), 41.

<sup>63</sup> Bernad Susser, “The Toyotomi Regim and the Daimyo,” in *The Bakufu in Japanese History*, ed. Jeffrey P. Mass and William B. Hauser (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 141.

<sup>64</sup> Mary Elizabeth Berry, *Hideyoshi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), 104-106



peasants, although it also gave a greater tax burden. The increased administrative requirements for countryside autonomy began the spread of literacy in villages.<sup>65</sup>

The commoners in the urban areas had many more chances to be exposed to literature and scholarship. During the 1600s and 1700s, Japanese society experienced rapid population growth, causing the development of the publishing industry. There were many private schools where everybody could learn Confucian classics and Chinese literature. Thus, some commoners found scholarship as another option to promote their social status. Razan was one of the great examples, proving that scholarship could help the commoners to promote their status. He was born into a *rōnin* family and then was adopted by a merchant but became an official scholar of the Tokugawa shogunate. Moreover, his descendants succeeded the position of Razan by heredity. Regardless the actual reputation of Razan, this was a great success in terms of social mobility.

With the establishment of the Tokugawa shogunate, both shogunate and local domains demanded more intellectual services. Prior to that time, only limited intellectual groups had enjoyed these opportunities but the emergence of professional Neo-Confucianists independent from the conventional privileged cartel changed the situation. The commoners who learned Neo-Confucian scholarship had opportunities to be hired by the ruling class. Not only Neo-Confucianism, but also other Confucian scholarship was helpful in promoting their social status. Neo-Confucianism became the major scholarship because it was the mainstream Confucian scholarship in East Asia at that time, not because Tokugawa Japan respected Neo-Confucian teachings. For instance, Kumazawa Banzan,

---

<sup>65</sup> Rubinger, *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan*, 15-18.

who came from a *rōnin* family, became an official scholar of Okayama prefecture after he studied Wang Yangming's teaching from Nakae Tōju. In addition, being Confucianist sometimes promised sufficient and stable income. Hattori Nankaku (1683-1759) who came from a family of commoners in Kyoto was a disciple of Sorai and later earned 150 *ryo* per year from students' tuition in his academy, equivalent to the salary of a mid-ranked samurai.<sup>66</sup>

Precisely speaking, Neo-Confucianists were not samurai. They were in the marginalized class between samurai and commoners and the treatment for their service was highly arbitrary. Some Confucianists were hired by political leaders and received quite good treatment and guaranteed political influence while others had to worry about limited income from teaching at small schools in rural towns. However, there were obvious successful role models which attracted people to access this scholarship.

In East Asia, the Confucian scholarship played a role as a vehicle of social mobility for a long time. Since Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty first accepted Confucianism as the state orthodoxy at the advice of his minister Dong Zhongshu, Confucianism enjoyed the prestigious position as the state ideology of China for over 2000 years. Before its adoption by Emperor Wu, Confucianism was no more than one of the "Hundred Schools" of thought, the intellectual cacophony of the late Zhou period. Advocates of Confucianism may want to believe that the lofty ethic codes and sophisticated philosophical system appealed to the intellectual hunger of the masses to finally become the major intellectual tradition, but I

---

<sup>66</sup> Yuasa Jōzan, *Bunkai zakki*, NZZ, vol. 2(Tokyo: Kokumin Tosho, 1927), 623.

think the success of Confucianism would be questionable were it not for the connection between Confucianism and imperial power.

Ideas such as the *Yin-Yang* and “Five Elements” theories dominated Chinese thought during the Han period, without much emphasis on Confucianism per se. The status of Confucian thought arose over these established traditions only after Dong Zhongshu propounded the theory of the interaction of Heaven and human beings, by integrating Confucian ideas and Yin-Yang cosmology, suggesting that heaven chooses an emperor and grants the authority according to his governance.

This theory satisfied Emperor Wu’s purposes for stabilizing his newly unified kingdom and justifying his authority and leadership. However, this adoption did not immediately convince commoners to follow the Confucian way. Confucianism was able to attract the people’s attention after it became the subject of a civil service examination for select officials. This signifies that, in the early stages, secular and utilitarian motivations rather than philosophical appeal stimulated the learning of Confucianism.

Confucianism became significant to the people when it became the subject of a civil service examination to select high-ranked officials because, in China, officials were in principle selected through meritocratic practices, and this represented a thorn in the side of the noble class that had previously enjoyed hereditary privileges. Until the Tang dynasty, landed aristocrats dominated China and had monopolized opportunities to become officials. Meanwhile, the establishment of the civil service examination broke this dominance.

The aristocratic tradition in China, or more accurately the merging of aristocratic and bureaucratic traditions, ended after the Song dynasty. In the transition from the Song to the Ming dynasty, increased reliance on the examination system augmented the dependence of

salaried officials on the state and the vulnerability of the officials vis-à-vis the emperor. When the power of the early aristocratic great families was broken, the new elite selected by the civil service examination emerged as the dominant class in Chinese history. From the standpoint of the emperor, hiring officials from non-aristocratic clans held merit as well because non-aristocratic officials selected by the examination were considered loyal to the emperor, helping him check aristocratic power.<sup>67</sup> Similar developments also occurred in Korean society after the adoption of a civil service examination system there.<sup>68</sup>

Attaining an official post was regarded as a great success in Chinese and Korean society, but more importantly the opportunity to apply to the examination was open to almost all social classes. Thus, Ping-Ti Ho argues, “Examination became the most important channel of social mobility.”<sup>69</sup> In principal, the only condition for those seeking to attain political success was to learn Confucian texts, and this utilitarian motif appealed to the people far before the values of Confucian philosophy. By this process, Chinese politics established a long-term tradition of hiring those with Confucian knowledge and culture as officials through the civil service examination.

There was also a civil service examination system in Japan in ancient times. Emperor Tenji (626-672) established the Daigakuryō, the first state educational institution based on Confucian scholarship, to foster candidates for junior bureaucratic positions. This

---

<sup>67</sup> Benjamin A. Elman, *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 12-14.

<sup>68</sup> James B. Palais, “Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Officialic Balance in Korea,” *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44, no. 2 (1984): 449.

<sup>69</sup> Ping-Ti Ho, *Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility 1368-1911* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), 73.

institution, which followed the academic system of Tang China, had 400 students from higher-ranked aristocratic families, and taught Confucian classics, literature, history, Chinese linguistics, and mathematics.<sup>70</sup> Students who passed the Daigakuryō examination could apply for the civil service examination hosted by the Shikibushō, the “Ministry of Rites, which managed bureaucratic appointments.”<sup>71</sup> Although this examination played only a minor role in whole recruitment, this system was the initial indication that Confucian scholarship was being used as fuel for social mobility in Japan.

The ideal of the examination system originally came from the concept of Confucian rulership as emphasizing moral superiority. According to this, the emperor should be morally perfect to govern effectively, but there is a possibility that the emperor would lose the balance of morality because he is ultimately just an imperfect human being. Thus, he needs assistance from virtuous subjects—and the way to identify those virtuous subjects best qualified to assist the emperor was to test their mastery of Confucian texts and doctrine. In this case, moral quality refers to the Confucian way. In the Confucian legend, there were four virtuous kings in antiquity, Yao, Shun, Yu, and Tang, who ruled the country by righteousness. They sacrificed themselves for public good and willingly listened to their subjects for better governance. Mencius introduced an anecdote of sage kings to explain the quality of a ruler.

When Yu heard good words, he bowed to the speaker. The great Shun had a still greater delight in what was good. He regarded virtue as the common property of

---

<sup>70</sup> Wajima Yoshio, *Chūsei no Jugaku*, 8.

<sup>71</sup> Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 12.

himself and others, giving up his own way to follow that of others, and delighting to learn from others to practice what was good.<sup>72</sup>

In Confucian belief, the authority of legitimate rulers came from moral superiority. The rulers claimed that they earned this moral quality by learning the lessons of the sage kings of antiquity and Confucian teachings. As even these sage kings could also make mistakes, they were expected to also learn from others. In Confucian politics, the people who advised the ruler were supposed to be officials selected by the civil service examination. We know this ideal did not always work well from the examples of many immoral emperors and corrupt officials in Chinese history, but the authority of these terrible emperors was protected by Confucian theories, and it also granted prestige to those who were knowledgeable in Confucian theory.

Moreover, the principle of eligibility for office through the examination did not reflect a perfect reality. It was difficult for commoners who had to spend most of their time working to make a living to prepare for the examination, and thus wealthy and well-supported people were usually successful in the examination. As the bureaucratic system based on Confucianism settled down, the officialdom had been transformed to a sort of closed power group.

During the Ming period in China, there was a special recruitment system for officials known as *pao-chü*. Needless to say, this special recruitment was designed to accept the members of a powerful elite group without the examination and badly undermined the authority of the civil service examination with corruption. Thus, Huang Zongxi (1610-

---

<sup>72</sup> Mencius, *The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge (Toronto: Dover Publications, 1970), 205.

1695), a Confucianist of the late Ming and early Qing periods, argued that the government should eliminate the special recruitment to reform and revive the healthy functioning of the civil service examination and officialdom.<sup>73</sup> In Chosŏn Korea, the opportunity to apply to the civil service examination was actually restricted to men from a hereditary status group called *yangban*. That is to say, Confucian bureaucracy became another name for Confucian aristocracy in Korea.<sup>74</sup>

However, it was still an undeniable lure to the people's secular desire to pursue Confucian scholarship. People who wanted to be politically successful studied Confucian texts and this process contributed to the spread of Confucian ideas and to the reproduction of the political influence of Confucianism across the generations. Such studies were motivated by practical concerns.

Kai-Wing Chow shows another example of how the civil service examination was important to the Chinese intellectual sphere from a socio-economic perspective. According to Chow, the civil service examination system significantly stimulated the development of the publishing industry of Ming China because it created both consumers and authors in the publishing market. First of all, the increasing population of examinees fostered the market for publications related to the examinations. The examinees bought printed editions of the classics, commentaries, and critiques to prepare for the examination. Thus, it was natural that the publishing industry developed based on this market. The other hand, this market

---

<sup>73</sup> Wm. Theodore de Bary, "A Plan for the Prince: The 'Ming-I Tai-Fang Lu of Huang Tsung-Hsi, Translated and Explained" (PhD Diss., Columbia University, 1953), 269.

<sup>74</sup> Fujiya Kawashima, *What is Yangban?: A Legacy for Modern Korea* (Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2002), 14.

created a group of authors. Since the number of official positions was limited, there were many applicants who failed to pass the examinations. Some of them sat for the examinations multiple times, while others changed course to participate in the publishing business by selling their experience and knowledge about the examination.<sup>75</sup>

Zhu Xi was the most highly regarded, and his philosophy was the ultimate authority in Neo-Confucianism, but his teachings became more powerful than others only after the collection of his commentaries on the classics became the major reference texts of preparing for a civil service examination. In short, the desire for social mobility actually contributed to the reinforcement of the metaphysical authority of Neo-Confucianism.

Kwang-Ching Liu argues that Neo-Confucianism did not have a forceful orthodoxy in its nature because it did not physically suppress other heterodoxies. Liu defines Confucian orthodoxy as a socio-ethical orthodoxy that focused on concrete interpersonal relationships, particularly the Five Relations and Three Bonds. This focus on interpersonal relationships, a concern of this world, made otherworldly concerns secondary. Whatever strengths Neo-Confucianism may have had in terms of metaphysics, cosmology, or spirituality and self-cultivation, they were not orthodoxy in and of themselves. What made such otherworldly beliefs orthodox was the goal that all of them attempted to support the personal relationship of this social world.<sup>76</sup>

---

<sup>75</sup> Kai-Wing Chow, *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 29.

<sup>76</sup> Kwang-Ching Liu, "Introduction," in *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, ed. Kwang-Ching Liu (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 12.



It is true that Neo-Confucianism did not physically suppress other traditions by force, but it had controlled its position on the top of others in a clever way through the examination system. In fact, Neo-Confucianism had the subtle power to attract followers as the doctrines were the answers to the examination itself. As long as the people wanted to pass the examination, they had to study and follow the mainstream interpretation of Neo-Confucian lessons. They would not be punished if they do not follow Neo-Confucian doctrine that the government suggested but they could not be successful in politics unless they do not obey it. The Neo-Confucian orthodoxy was created, transited, and reinforced in this process.

Unlike its counterparts in China or Korea, the civil service examination system in Japan was only open to students in the Daigakuryō. Thus, it is hard to say that it maintained the principle of a civil service examination open to the public, but the Daigakuryō accepted the children of low-ranking officials who could not conventionally expect to be elevated to high-level positions in the government and gave them the opportunity to realize their dream. In this sense, the Daigakuryō examination system kept the nature of the civil service examination alive as the vehicle of social mobility through accessing scholarship. However, the force of the nobles ended this function. The civil service examination gradually lost its influence and functioned on a small and limited scale.<sup>77</sup>

After Daigakuryō lost its function, Japan did not have a civil service examination system for a long time. Although a similar format of the civil service examination was briefly revived in 1793 as *sodokuginmi* (the contest of memorizing Confucian classics) and

---

<sup>77</sup> Robert Borgen, *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*, 88.

the winners of this contest were rewarded, this did not develop into a regular system of bureaucratic recruitment. Daigakuryō might have survived longer if it had been able to maintain its function as the main supplier of officials to the state regardless of the status of Confucianism in Japan. If the system established in Japan had remained successful for a long time, the history of Confucianism in the country would likely have followed the exemplary tracks of China and Korea. However, the Japanese system was not able to elevate the position of Confucianism to that of state ideology and declined soon after the noble class, which enjoyed hereditary privileges, began to dominate officialdom during the Heian period (794-1185). Therefore, the people's interest in Confucian texts was automatically decreased once Confucianism lost its function as a "ladder of success."<sup>78</sup>

Consequently, with the abolishment of the Daigakuryō examination system, Confucian scholarship was downgraded to a mere literary accessory of the aristocracy, and a few noble literati families such as the "Hakase-ke" including Kiyowara, Hino, Ōe, Sugawara, Nakahara and Miyoshi clans claimed to be authorities in interpreting Confucian classics. Since Hakase-ke had esoterically transmitted their scholarship only in their territory, the character of their scholarship became fixed and unchangeable.

Meanwhile, the absence of the civil service examination endowed a unique color to Neo-Confucian scholarship in Japan. The absence of the examination meant there was no orthodoxy in Confucian scholarship which worked as the answer key. Thus, Japanese Confucianism could enjoy vast freedom in accessing scholarship. In addition, it was easier to be a Neo-Confucianist in Japan than in China or Korea because there was no civil service

---

<sup>78</sup> Quoted from the title of Ping-Ti Ho's work, *The Ladder of Success in Imperial China, Aspects of Social Mobility, 1368-1911*.

examination system. In China and Korea, the people who failed the exam could not proclaim their professions as Neo-Confucianists, but in Japan there were no conditions or regulations to be a Neo-Confucianist. They could be a 'Neo-Confucianist' as long as they studied Confucian classics for themselves or by attending academies.

During the early Tokugawa period, many commoners began to be involved with Confucian scholarship because there were few entry barriers, while providing them the opportunity to promote their social status. The biggest difference between the Tokugawa period and previous times lies in the size of the Neo-Confucian population. This signifies that the absolute number of Neo-Confucianists simply increased in these periods, but more importantly these independent Neo-Confucianists were the first Neo-Confucian knowledge holders whose primary, or even sole, identity was that of a Neo-Confucianist.

These newly emergent professional Neo-Confucianists contributed to making Neo-Confucianism stand out more distinctively during the Tokugawa period. They advertised themselves as full-time professional Neo-Confucianists, in contrast to Zen monks who studied Neo-Confucianism as a part-time job. They began to compete with Zen monks for opportunities for political participation. That is to say, the Neo-Confucian scholarship worked as the vehicle of social mobility for commoners, and we should understand that the rise of Neo-Confucianism reflects the popularity of professional Neo-Confucianists rather than Neo-Confucian values.

## Conclusion

Historical narratives of Neo-Confucianism in Japan usually place Fujiwara Seika in the position of the founding father of Neo-Confucianism in Japan because the concept of the Neo-Confucianist did not exist in Japanese intellectual society prior to Seika. Of course, Seika was not the first to introduce Neo-Confucianism to Japan, but previous research has presented Seika as the first Japanese scholar who deeply understood the metaphysical meaning of Neo-Confucianism.<sup>1</sup>

Seika was a Zen monk of Shōkokuji in Kyoto, and it is believed that he encountered Neo-Confucian scholarship in the monastery, since the study of Neo-Confucianism had been a part of the curriculum in Zen monasteries since the Kamakura period. However, at the time he left the temple, in 1591, Seika still identified himself as a Buddhist, only later becoming a Neo-Confucian scholar. That is to say, Seika's conversion from a Zen monk to Neo-Confucianist is regarded as the genesis of the history of Neo-Confucianism in Japan, and exploring the motives for Seika's conversion as the gateway to examine the entire history of Neo-Confucianism in Japan.

Previous research has argued that Seika converted because he found flaws and contradictions in Buddhist logic while he was studying the Confucian classics and obtained the insight into Neo-Confucian philosophy. Kanaya Osamu concluded that Seika renounced Buddhism after he gained philosophical enlightenment of Neo-Confucianism through his reading the Confucian classics.<sup>2</sup> Ōta Seikyū merely repeats

---

<sup>1</sup> Hara Nensai, *Sentetsu sōdan*, 1: 16

<sup>2</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, 449.

what Kanaya argued.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Takahashi Fumihiko argues that Seika separated Neo-Confucianism from Zen Buddhism because of fundamental philosophical differences between the two traditions.<sup>4</sup> In addition, Abe Yoshio argues that Korean Neo-Confucianism heavily influenced Seika's philosophy.<sup>5</sup>

This conclusion, however, is unconvincing. Previous research deals with Seika's conversion as a sort of religious conversion: a tradition transition. Rambo defines a tradition transition as a religious transition from one major tradition to another one.<sup>6</sup> Since Seika shifted his identification from Zen monk to Neo-Confucianist, Rambo's taxonomy seems to work properly.

By the way, we have to agree with at least two premises when we accept this account. First, that Seika was an exclusive Neo-Confucian philosopher who would not compromise his philosophical stance with other ideas. Second, that he was an anti-Buddhist who could not endure "the contractions" of Buddhist logic or the philosophical conflict between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism. Unfortunately, previous research has failed to prove either of these hypotheses.

On the first point, Seika was never an exclusively Neo-Confucian philosopher. He had an eclectic attitude and methodology in the formulation of his philosophical system. Most of all, he followed Lin Zhao-en, a Chinese scholar famous for his Buddhist-

---

<sup>3</sup> Ōta Seikyū, *Fujiwara Seika*, 54.

<sup>4</sup> Takahashi Fumihiko, "Jukyō to Bukkyō no ronsō," 149.

<sup>5</sup> Abe Yoshio, *Nihon shushigaku to Chōsen*, 3.

<sup>6</sup> Rambo, "Interview: Lewis R. Rambo," <http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/resources/dciarchive/zinterviewrambo.html> (accessed July 4, 2011)

Daoist-Confucian eclecticism.<sup>7</sup> Seika did not even follow Zhu Xi's stance in the interpretation of the *Great Learning*. Seika had several opportunities to communicate with Korean Neo-Confucianists, either prisoners of war like Kang Hang, or *literati* in Korean diplomatic missions to Japan, but his eclecticism shows that Korean influence was not that significant on his scholarship.

On the second point, Seika's attitude toward Buddhism after he left monastic orders was actually quite vague. Of course, we can find a few primary sources suggesting that he had suspicions about Buddhism, but it is hard to describe them as harsh criticism of Buddhism based on anti-Buddhist sentiment.<sup>8</sup> On the contrary, there is ample evidence in primary sources that Seika continued to have a positive attitude toward Buddhism.<sup>9</sup> His philosophical essays also reveal that his major criticism was directed at the Zen clergy, rather than Zen Buddhism *per se*. Moreover, Seika continued to introduce himself to others as *susho* of Shōkokuji even after he officially cut all ties the temple. Seika capitalized on his career and his network involved with Shōkokuji when he sought political patronage, even after he left the temple.

Considering these accounts, it is hard to conclude that Seika's conversion was the result of anti-Buddhism formulated by the philosophical enlightenment of Neo-Confucianism. In fact, several scholars such as Imanaka Kanji and Richard Bowring have already recognized that Seika was neither an exclusive Neo-Confucian philosopher nor an anti-Buddhist<sup>10</sup>, but they do not connect this idea to the assumption about Seika's

---

<sup>7</sup> Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu, 360.

<sup>8</sup> Fujiwara Seika, "Kana shōri," 408.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 408.

<sup>10</sup> Imanaka Kanji, *Kinsei Nihon seiji shisōshi no seiritsu*, 22., Bowring, "Fujiwara Seika and the Great Learning," 444.

conversion. They have just automatically or habitually accepted Seika's conversion as a typical tradition transition because they were excessively familiar with the character of Neo-Confucianism in East Asia which had competed with Buddhism both philosophically and institutionally.

However, we should remember that the relationship between Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism throughout East Asia was quite different from doctrinal and institutional rivalries in other religion traditions, such as Christianity and Islam because neither system forced people to abandon their inherent beliefs and accept one system exclusively.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, institutional differences between China and Korea, which enforced state orthodoxy and recruited government talent on the basis of a civil service exam system, and Japan, where the exam system never took root, and recruitment was based on primarily on hereditary status, Neo-Confucian anti-Buddhism evolved and manifested quite differently in Japan than it had in China or Korea. In addition, both Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism in Japan had different natures from Chinese or Korean ones. Japanese Buddhism had stronger secular aspects than other East Asian counterparts, and Japanese Neo-Confucian scholarship had a much less philosophical and more utilitarian character.

Entering a temple in Japan also had a different meaning from China or Korea. In early modern Japan, monasteries had played the role of educational institution as well as a center of Buddhist religion. In addition, many second or third sons from noble families who had no rights to succeed to household headship chose to become Zen monks as a sort of occupation. Considering all of these accounts, it becomes much

---

<sup>11</sup> Jacques Gernet, *China and the Christian Impact* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 61

easier to understand Seika's complicated actions and sentiment toward Buddhism. In this regard, we should not easily conclude that Seika's conversion was propelled by anti-Buddhist sentiment or philosophical conflicts between Buddhism and Confucianism.

As an alternative perspective, we need to examine Seika's conversion through a utilitarian lens instead of a philosophical one. I do not mean that Seika had nothing to do with Neo-Confucian philosophy. I just suggest that even intellectuals involved in metaphysical speculation are also human beings who have to worry about their daily life, and that this very mundaneness quite often affects the motives of the intellectuals' actions.

In this sense, we need to shift our perspective to a utilitarian view since there is no evidence that the motives for Seika's conversion were metaphysical, and conclude that Seika's conversion was the a response to the competition with other Zen Buddhists in the intellectual marketplace. In the transitional decades of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, the dawn of early modern Japan, Zen monks were the main players in the intellectual marketplace; they exchanged intellectual services for the patronage of political leaders, and Shōkokuji, Seika's home temple, was the central place for these purveyors of intellectual service.

However, Shōkokuji's political influence declined significantly after the Ōnin War (1467-1477), and Shōkokuji monks had to take aggressive action to earn political patronage. Therefore, each Shōkokuji monk pursued a different political network. Seika left the temple after he had a conflict with his uncle Jusen. The details and the reason of this conflict are unclear. I believe that different ideas on the political network caused the



conflict and it forced Seika to leave the temple. Seika utilized his previous position as *shuso*, and the Shōkokuji network, to work as a scholar even after he left the temple.

This reveals that Seika did not leave the temple simply of his will. I also think this was the first stage of his conversion, in Rambo's terms, an "institution transition," because his conversion was not an ideological or doctrinal move from Zen Buddhism to Neo-Confucianism, but an institutional shift, from temple-based Zen scholar-monk to independent non-monastery-based scholar-monk.

I think that Seika's identity as Neo-Confucianist was formulated much later than his departure from the temple, and that it was also caused by a practical purpose. After he left the temple, he had to compete with Zen monks in the intellectual market on his own, without institutional support. As noted above, because Japan did not have an objective tool to estimate scholarly quality, like the Chinese or Korean civil service examinations, peer evaluation and public reputation were important to prove scholars' quality.

Seika, whose departure from the temple deprived him of access to the sorts of resources and networks needed to compete with temple-based Zen scholar-monks, positioned himself as a full-time, professional Neo-Confucianist to find a competitive edge over Zen monks in the intellectual market. That is to say, Seika claimed his identity as a Neo-Confucianist to distinguish himself from Zen monks as a more professional Neo-Confucian knowledge holder. In addition, Seika tried to visualize Confucian practices and institutions. Japanese intellectuals did not have concepts of Confucian institutions such as Confucian rituals, Confucian shrines, and the Confucian scholar's costume. Seika, however, had gained this information from Kang Hang, and

adopted them as a sort of marketing to survive in the market and it seems that this strategy was successful.

Razan was another great contributor to the creation of Seika's image as an anti-Buddhist, because many modern scholars have depended on *Gyōjō*, Razan's version of Seika's biography. Most of Seika's strongly anti-Buddhist sentiment came from statements in the *Gyōjō*. As a matter of fact, Razan intentionally manipulated the image of Seika as an anti-Buddhist to secure his position in the shogunate.

Razan is known as another Neo-Confucian convert from Zen. At the same time, he was also regarded as one of the most significant disciples of Seika's school. It is certain that he had studied at Kenninji, a Gozan Zen monastery in Kyoto, that he became a Neo-Confucian scholar after he left the temple, and also that he had many contacts with Seika. It was thanks to the relationship with Seika, that Razan was able to get a position in the shogunate as an intellectual service-worker.

However, Razan showed an excessively exaggerated attitude when he talked about Buddhism and Seika. First of all, Razan was not an ordained monk. He was nothing but a novice who had entered the temple to pursue Chinese studies, but declined the chance to become a regular monk at Kenninji.<sup>12</sup> Considering the character of the Zen monastery as an educational institution in late medieval and early modern Japan, it is unclear whether Razan ever intended to become a Zen monk. In this regard, Razan's renunciation of affiliation with Kenninji was more in the character of a graduation than a conversion. Indeed, Razan left the temple even before he encountered Neo-Confucian texts. From this perspective, then, even if we are to accept the accounts of the converts,

---

<sup>12</sup> Suzuki Ken'ichi, *Hayashi Razan nenpukō*, 13.

we can assume that certain additional motivations other than merely philosophical concerns propelled their shift from Zen to Neo-Confucianism.

In addition, Razan displayed an exaggerated anti-Buddhism after he became an intellectual assistant in the shogunate. The best example of this move is Razan's criticism of Shūhō Myōchō, a famous fourteenth-century Zen monk. Razan argued that Myōchō killed and ate his children in order to be a monk.<sup>13</sup> This story, of course, is apocryphal, as Razan was fully aware. Some scholars, such as Joseph Spae, argue that Razan's excessive hostility toward Buddhism showed Razan's character as a strict follower of Neo-Confucian philosophy.<sup>14</sup> However, the nature of Razan's scholarship was closer to that of an encyclopedic erudite than to a Neo-Confucian philosopher, and the public also recognized him as a polymath rather than as a philosopher. In addition, Razan accepted the position and the appearance of a Buddhist monk when he entered service with the shogunate, a compromise his contemporary Nakae Tōju, a follower of Wang Yangming's philosophy, criticized as a betrayal of Confucianism.<sup>15</sup>

Razan displayed mixed, complicated behaviors toward Buddhism just as Seika did, because his actions against Buddhism were informed by his socio-political situation, rather than from religious or philosophical faith.

Although Razan was hired by Ieyasu to be an intellectual assistant in the shogunate, rank of his initial rank and position were low, and his political influence was weak. The early Tokugawa shogunate followed the medieval convention of hiring Zen monks for intellectual service in governance, and Razan was nothing but an assistant to

---

<sup>13</sup> Hayashi Razan, *Hayashi Razan bunshū*, 2: 671.

<sup>14</sup> Spae, "Buddhism as Viewed by Two Tokugawa Confucianists: " 168-69.

<sup>15</sup> Nakae Tōju, "Rinshi teihatsu juiben," 13-16.

Ishin Sūden, an intellectual advisor recruited from Zen Buddhism. In this situation, Sūden was promoted to *sōroku*, supervisor of all Zen monasteries in the country, in 1619. Although Sūden's political influence declined in many respects after the death of Ieyasu, and Nankōbō Tenkai's power increased, his initiative in the intellectual service was still alive, and his promotion to *sōroku* even reinforced the influence of Nanzenji, Sūden's home temple, as the pool of the intellectual manpower for the shogunate. This was quite bad news for Razan who had competed with Zen monks on the same battlefield.

The year of 1619 was the time Seika's death as well, and Razan composed the *Gyōjō* to preserve the memory of Seika. Razan had certain calculations when he wrote the *Gyōjō*, however, beyond simple biography. First of all, he attempted to position himself as the successor to Seika's scholarship through *Gyōjō*, though in fact Seika seems not to have considered Razan his disciple, and Seika's academic lineage was actually continued by Matsunaga Sekigo.

In this regard, I argue that Razan borrowed Seika's name to reinforce his reputation as a Neo-Confucian scholar. He also manipulated Seika's image as an anti-Buddhist to express his own criticism of Buddhism through Seika's words because Razan's own influence in the power dynamics of the intellectual sphere in the shogunate was not enough to directly challenge the Buddhist side.

At first glance, then, Razan's anti-Buddhism seems like a criticism of Buddhism in general. However, his anti-Buddhism mainly targeted the Rinzai Zen sect, rather than other sects such as Tendai. Religious or philosophical matters, that is, did not cause Razan's conflict with Zen Buddhism. The collision of two intellectual groups, Zen Buddhists represented by Sūden and the Neo-Confucianists led by Razan and the

Hayashi family, which had competed for the leading role as intellectual professionals in the service to the shogunate, prompted Razan to mount his excessive anti-Buddhism campaign.

Razan was also good at marketing his scholarship. As mentioned above, Razan could not match the influence of Buddhist intellectual advisors to the shogunate, such as Sūden and Tenkai, at the beginning. However, he kept exaggerating his influence and the shogunate's interest in Neo-Confucianism, and this helped him to gradually increase his power to replace Zen monks with the members of his clan in the shogunate after all.

In general, I agree with the thesis that Seika is the founding father of Neo-Confucianism in Japan. However, I do not agree with the conventional assumption that Seika was the first person in Japan to discover the philosophical values of Neo-Confucianism. I think that the major contributions of Seika to the history of Neo-Confucianism are following three.

1. He conceptualized Neo-Confucianism as a stand-alone practice and institution.
2. He liberated access to Neo-Confucian texts and scholarship from the confines of the Zen monasteries' monopoly.
3. These two factors laid the groundwork for the emergence of professional Neo-Confucianists.

Since Neo-Confucian texts and philosophy had previously been studied only as a part of the curriculum of Zen monasteries, the sources and the access to scholarship were monopolized by Zen monks. People who wanted to study Neo-Confucian scholarship had to be Zen monks; it was quite hard otherwise for them to find access to Neo-Confucianism outside the monastery.

Previous scholarship assumed that it was only in the Tokugawa era that Japanese discovered the significance of Neo-Confucianism. Due to the history of Neo-Confucianism under the influence of Zen Buddhism, scholars have held that Neo-Confucianism prior to the Tokugawa period existed merely as an intellectual accessory of Zen monastery scholarship. Peter Nosco states “Neo-Confucianism did not achieve independent status during these centuries and remained in the shadow of its Buddhist patron.”<sup>16</sup> Abe Yoshio addresses that studying Neo-Confucianism served as an auxiliary culture of Zen monks.<sup>17</sup> These arguments imply that Neo-Confucianism in Japan obtained the significance only after the Tokugawa period, and also imply that Neo-Confucianism did not become historically significant in Japan until the beginning of the Tokugawa period. However, this dichotomous perspective misses one important point that the demand for the Neo-Confucian scholarship for the utilitarian purpose existed even prior to the Tokugawa period.

Confucianism has a strong image of philosophy but it also served as a cultural medium for Chinese civilization. Confucian scholarship, that is, not only emphasized philosophical thought, but also served as a type of cultural package including Chinese law, history, ritual and literature. Thus, countries neighboring China imported Confucian scholarship when they developed their own politics and social system. Neo-Confucianism had been the mainstream school of Confucianism in China since the Song, and gradually spread to the countries on China’s periphery.

Zen monks imported Neo-Confucian scholarship from China early in the Kamakura period, and utilized it as an intellectual commodity in purveying their

---

<sup>16</sup> Peter Nosco, “Introduction: Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa Discourse,” in *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, ed. Peter Nosco (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 7.

<sup>17</sup> Abe Yoshio, *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen*, 13.

intellectual services to the shogunate. Although Confucianism had not been intellectually dominant in Japan, Confucian scholarship had long served as a valuable source of cultural capital for Japanese intellectuals seeking to obtain socio-political influence in spite of the fact that Japan lacked the tradition of a civil service examination system, which in other East Asian countries had served as a device to connect Confucian scholarship both to state ideology and to individuals' ambition for political success. Neo-Confucianism in Japan had long been an important asset for Zen Buddhism to maintain political patronage from the shogunate because Neo-Confucian scholarship was a cutting-edge cultural package satisfying the demand of Japanese politics.

Therefore, Zen Buddhism esoterically circulated the study of Neo-Confucianism within monasteries because control of access to Neo-Confucian scholarship was an important matter for Zen Buddhism's job security. In other words, knowledge of Neo-Confucianism as "Chinese studies" (*kangaku*) had served as an instrument to connect Confucian scholarship to individual monks' ambition for political success.

Although Neo-Confucian scholarship had been confined in Zen monasteries, there was no official regulation to limit the access to Neo-Confucian scholarship from the people outside the Rinzaï monastery. Instead, there was a glass ceiling on it. Gozan monasteries monopolized their control over the majority of Neo-Confucian sources, meaning that there were few ways for outsiders to access Neo-Confucianism. That is to say, it was difficult for scholars involved with Neo-Confucian scholarship to spontaneously emerge outside the temples.

However, Seika's conversion changed this situation. He was nothing but a lonely independent scholar when he left the temple, but his career in Shōkokuji and his family

background as a descendant of Fujiwara no Teika, as well as his scholarly quality, helped him to survive in the market. After he established his own private school to train a younger generation of Neo-Confucianists in Kyoto, academies teaching Neo-Confucian scholarship gradually increased and many people were attracted to Kyoto to study the new scholarship. This also contributed to the rapid expansion of the Neo-Confucian population.

Interestingly many of the students in private academies were commoners, such as peasants and merchants. Pursuing scholarship might be regarded as a sort of recreational activities for people who do not need to worry about their livelihood. However, many of those who chose to study Neo-Confucian teachings were economically marginalized people. Kate Nakai argues that the number of the people who adopted Neo-Confucian values as their ethical creed increased, expanding the population committed to pursuing Neo-Confucian scholarship.<sup>18</sup> Anecdotes from the careers of Nakae Tōju<sup>19</sup> and Ishida Baigan<sup>20</sup> reveal that Confucian values did not immediately spread throughout the Japanese public, which also means that the increase in the numbers of students of Neo-Confucian was not mainly related to the spread of Confucian philosophy among the people at large.

To examine this issue, we have pay attention to the increasing recruitment of Neo-Confucian scholars by Tokugawa political institutions—not only by the shogunate, but by daimyos around the country. Japanese politics had traditionally fulfilled its need for intellectual service with Zen monks, but once Ieyasu hired Razan, Neo-Confucian

---

<sup>18</sup> Nakai, “The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan:” 157.

<sup>19</sup> Bitō Masahide, “Tōju sensei nenpu,” 287.

<sup>20</sup> Ishida Baigan, *Ishida Baigan zenshū*, 1: 251.



scholars surged as the rival of the monks. Previous research has interpreted this change as a sign of the rise of Neo-Confucianism over Buddhism in the ideological sphere of the shogunate. Maruyama Masao's work is the representative research on this issue. He argued that the Tokugawa shogunate adopted Neo-Confucianism as the state ideology because it was suitable to manage a newly unified Japan.<sup>21</sup> This assumption was long accepted as the standard explanation of the relationship between Neo-Confucianism and early modern Japanese politics, but later research by Watanabe Hiroshi, Jan Boot, and Herman Ooms has definitively refuted this idea, and the state ideology paradigm is no longer accepted.

It is certain that Ieyasu showed deep interest in scholarship, including Neo-Confucianism. However, this does not mean either he followed Neo-Confucian lessons or tried to spread its philosophical values to Japanese society. Although the *Tokugawa jikki* suggests that his interest in scholarship showed Ieyasu's quality as the ruler,<sup>22</sup> samurai interest in scholarship was not rare. Even Toyotomi Hideyoshi, who was disdained by the Korean embassy as an ignorant dictator,<sup>23</sup> had a huge group of *otogishū*, intellectual and artistic service workers. Scholarship was important to Japanese samurai leaders as well because they could not govern their territories without intellectual services in such areas as history record, diplomacy, law, and divination. However, they had a different method of utilizing than the rulers of China or Korea.

---

<sup>21</sup> Maruyama Masao, *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*, 29-30.

<sup>22</sup> *Tōshōgū gyojikki furoku*, 339.

<sup>23</sup> Pak Tongnyang, "Kije sacho," accessed August 18, 2010, DKC, [http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcd/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc\\_mk\\_a019&gunchaid=av001&finId=001&startOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_a019\\_av001\\_001&endOrgnText=kc\\_ko\\_a019\\_av001\\_001](http://db.itkc.or.kr/itkcd/text/textViewPopup.jsp?seojiId=kc_mk_a019&gunchaid=av001&finId=001&startOrgnText=kc_ko_a019_av001_001&endOrgnText=kc_ko_a019_av001_001)

Elsewhere in East Asia, Confucian scholarship was the orthodox vehicle of self-cultivation. In addition, a ruler was supposed to be the most self-cultivated in the concept of Confucian politics. Therefore, skill in reading and writing was the most elementary and necessary quality of being a ruler. However, medieval Japanese leaders had a different idea on this matter. They found their own way to access scholarship, primarily by hiring intellectuals, so-called *otogishū*, who provided them with encyclopedic knowledge. They asked these *otogishū* to read and write documents on their behalf. This is a similar concept of a computerized database system in modern time. When they needed some knowledge, they accessed a terminal (*otogishū*) to retrieve information from the database (knowledge in the *otogishū*'s brain). This was the concept of scholarship for samurai. In this sense, Ieyasu's interest in scholarship was not new.

The important thing is why the Tokugawa shogunate and other daimyo domains broke the convention of hiring Zen Buddhists by recruiting Neo-Confucian scholars. We have already seen that the philosophy framework does not explain this development. Shoguns and daimyos hired Neo-Confucian scholars because the scholars became newly available during the early Tokugawa period. Thanks to Seika, full-time and professional Neo-Confucian scholars appeared outside Zen monasteries. As for the samurai leaders, the intellectual background of *otogishū* was not that important as long as they could utilize *otogishū*'s knowledge as practical information.

Of course, if Tokugawa Japan found the merit of hiring professional Neo-Confucianists only in availability, there would not be a reason to switch intellectual service providers from Zen monks to Neo-Confucianists. Exclusive and full-time Neo-Confucianists were better at *kangaku* than Zen monks who did their Confucian studies

as a ‘minor field.’ Even more, they were more of an economical source of talent comparing with Zen monks because they came as individuals and did not make demands for institutional support such as endowing temples. I think this circumstance invited the strange situation of Neo-Confucianism in early Tokugawa Japan: the increasing preference of Neo-Confucianists in politics without the spread of Neo-Confucian values.

At the beginning, the number of professional Neo-Confucian scholars could not have been large, but successful role models like Seika and Razan stimulated the mind of commoners, *rōnin* or to younger sons of samurai with no institutional future. During the Sengoku period, warfare was the major business for samurai, and even ordinary people could increase their property and promote their social status through military service. However this vehicle of social mobility was abolished after Hideyoshi mandated the separation of peasants and samurai. Commoners with the ambition to enhance their social status found Neo-Confucian scholarship a useful vehicle of social mobility and they gathered in the private schools in Kyoto and the surrounding area.

Seika and Razan were neither brilliant nor original Neo-Confucian philosophers. Their direct contributions to the development of Neo-Confucian philosophy in Japan were insignificant. However, Seika created the foundation for Neo-Confucianism as an independent scholarly tradition and Razan demonstrated the utility and practicality of that scholarship for social mobility. We can find Seika’s and Razan’s historical significance in these utilitarian aspects.

Was this expansion of the Confucian population a part of Seika’s plan when he established his academy? Did Razan really locate himself as the advocate of Neo-Confucianists in Tokugawa shogunate? We cannot sure if this was their intent, but the

establishment of Seika's academy marked a significant turning point in the history of Japanese Neo-Confucianism, and Razan's success in the shogunate ignited people's interest in Neo-Confucian scholarship. These were the consequences of their actions rather than their actual intentions. Louis Althusser argued that historical contingency emerges from the unpredictable coincidence of determinate processes which produces an overdetermined result.<sup>24</sup>

I believe his argument can be applied to the case of Seika's and Razan's contributions to the history of Neo-Confucianism in Japan. In a short, the spread of Neo-Confucian scholarship in Tokugawa Japan would be the unpredictable coincidence accompanying with Seika's and Razan's moves for survival as individual intellectuals.

---

<sup>24</sup> Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969), 208.

## Bibliography

### Abbreviation:

DNK: Dai-Nihon komonjo  
 DNS: Dai-Nihon shiryō  
 DNSSD: Dai-Nihon Shiryō Sōgo Database  
 DKC: Database of Korean Classics  
 KFTD: Komonjo Full-Text Database  
 NKBZ: Nihon koten bungaku zenshū  
 NKBT: Nihon koten bungaku taikai  
 NKS: Nihon keizai sōsho  
 NST: Nihon shisō taikai  
 NZZ: Nihon zuihitsu zenshū  
 SHNB: Shonen hitsudoku Nihon bunko  
 SS: Shiryō Sōran  
 SZKT: Shintei zōho kokushi taikai  
 ZST: Zōho shiryō taisei

### Archival Sources:

Dai-Nihon Shiryō Sōgo Database, Shiryō Hensanjo, University of Tokyo  
 Database of Korean Classics, Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics  
 Komonjo Full-Text Database, Shiryō Hensanjo, University of Tokyo

### Internet Sources:

Dialogue Ireland. "Interview: Lewis R. Rambo,"  
<http://www.dialogueireland.org/dicontent/resources/dciarchive/zinterviewrambo.html>

### Primary Source:

Emura Hokkai. *Jugyōhen*. SHNB. Edited by Kishigami Misao. Vol. 3, Tokyo: Hakubunkan, 1891.

Fujiwara Seika. "Daigaku yōryaku." In *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, edited by Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu. NST. Vol. 28, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.

———. "Kana shōri." In *Fujiwara Seika shū*, edited by Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978.

———. "Nankō nikki zankan." In *Fujiwara Seika shū*, edited by Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978.

Hayashi Razan. *Hayashi Razan bunshū*. Edited by Kyōto Shiseikikai. 2 vols., Tokyo: Perikansha, 1979.

- . “*Santokushō*.” In *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, edited by Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu. NST. Vol. 28, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.
- . “Seika sensei gyōjō.” In *Fujiwara Seika shū*, edited by Kokumin Seishin Bunka Kenkyūsho. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1978.
- “The Great Learning.” Translated and edited by James Legge. In *The Confucian Analects, the Great Learning & the Doctrine of the Mean*. New York: Dover Publications, 1971.
- Hara Nensai. *Sentetsu sōdan*. Vol. 1, Tokyo: Yūhōdō Shoten, 1920.
- Hoashi Banri. *Tōsenfuron*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1941.
- Honda Heihachirō. “Honda Heihachirō kikigaki.” In *Kinsei seidō-ron*, edited by Naramoto Tatsuya. NST. Vol. 38, KojikTokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976.
- Imai Gen'e, ed. *Kojiki*. NKBZ. Vol. 1, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1983.
- Ishida Baigan. *Ishida Baigan zenshū*. Edited by Shibata Minoru. Vol. 1, Osaka: Seibundō Shuppan, 1972.
- Ishida Ichirō, and Kanaya Osamu, eds. *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*. NST. Vol. 28, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.
- Kang Hang. “Kanyangnok.” Translated by Yi Ulho. Seoul: Sōhe Munjip, 2005.
- Kang Hongjung. “Tongsarok.” In DKC. Seoul: Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics.
- Kuroita Katsumi, ed. “*Tōshōgū gyojikki furoku*.” In *Tokugawa jikki*. SZKT. Vol. 38, Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1929.
- Nam Yongik. “Munkyōn pyōlnok.” In DKC. Seoul: Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics.
- Mencius. *The Works of Mencius*. Translated by James Legge. Toronto: Dover Publications, 1970.
- Nakae Tōju. “Rinshi teihatsu juiben.” In *Nakae Tōju*, edited by Yamanoi Yū, Yamashita Rūji, Kaji Nobuyuki and Bitō Masahide. NST. Vol. 29, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974.
- Nakahara no Yasutomi. *Yasutomi-ki 4*. ZST. Edited by Shiryō Taisei Kankōkai Tokyo: Rinsen shoten, 1965.
- Pak Tongnyang. “Kije Sacho.” In DKC. Seoul: Institute for the Translation of Korean Classics.
- Sakamoto Tarō, ed. *Nihon shoki*. NKBT. Vol. 67, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967.

Shiryō Hensanjo, comp. “DNS” in DNSSD. Tokyo: University of Tokyo

———, comp. “*Shimazu-ke monjo*.” in KFTD. Tokyo: University of Tokyo

———, comp. “SS” in DNSSD. Tokyo: University of Tokyo

Yuasa Jōzan. *Bunkai zakki*. NZZ. Edited by Kokumin Tosho. Vol. 2, Tokyo: Kokumin Tosho, 1927.

Zhu Xi. *Mōshi wakumon Daigaku wakumon Chūyō wakumon*. Edited by Okada Takehiko. Kyoto: Chūbun Shuppansha, 1977.

———. *Zhu Xi ji*. Edited by Guo Qi. pt.59, Vol. 5, Chengdu: Sichuan Jiaoyu Chubanshe, 1996.

Takeuchi Yoshio. *Mōshi*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1928.

### Secondary Source:

Abe Yoshio. *Nihon Shushigaku to Chōsen*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1978.

Althusser, Louis. *For Marx*. Translated by Ben Brewster. London: Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1969.

Anno Masaki. “Sengoku-ki Nihon no bōeki tantōsha: Zensō kara Iezusukaishi e.” *Kurosu rōdo: Hirosaki Daigaku kyōiku gakubu kenkyū kiyo* 2 (2000): 9-18.

Asakura Hisashi. *Zenrin no bungaku: shikai to sono shūhen*. Osaka: Seibundō Shuppan, 2004.

Ashikaga Enjutsu. *Kamakura Muromachi jidai no Jukyō*. Tokyo: Nihon Koten Zenshū Kankōkai, 1932.

Azuma Jūji. “Edo shoki ni okeru gakujuku no hatten to Chūgoku Chōsen.” *Higashi Ajia bunka kōryū kenkyū* 2 (2009): 47-66.

Beonio-Brocchieri, Paolo. “On the Historical Importance of Fujiwara Seika.” *Modern Asian Studies* 18, no. 4 (1984): 609-18.

Berry, Mary Elizabeth. *Hideyoshi*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.

———. *Japan in Print: Information and Nation in the Early Modern Japan*. Berkeley University of California Press, 2006.

———. “Was Early Modern Japan Culturally Integrated?”. In *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to C. 1830*, edited by Victor B Lieberman. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999.

Bitō Masahide. *Edo jidai towa nanika: Nihonshi-jō no kinsei to kindai*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1992.

- . “Tōju Sensei nenpu.” In *Nakae Tōju*, edited by Yamanoi Yū. NST. Vol. 29, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1974.
- Bloch, Marc. *Feudal Society: Social Classes and Political Organization*. Translated by L. A. Manyon. Vol. 2, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1989.
- Bodart-Bailey, Beatrice. *The Dog Shogun: The Personality and Policies of Tokugawa Tsunayoshi*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2006.
- Boot, Jan Willem. “The Adoption and Adaption of Neo-Confucianism in Japan: The Role of Fujiwara Seika and Hayashi Razan.” PhD diss., Leiden University, 1983.
- . “Twegyehak kwa Ilbon.” *Twegye Hakpo* 31, no. 439-468 (1981).
- Borgen, Robert. *Sugawara no Michizane and the Early Heian Court*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. *Language & Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.
- Bowring, Richard John. “Fujiwara Seika and the Great Learning.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 61, no. 4 (2006): 437-57.
- Camus, Albert. “Return to Tipasa.” Translated by Ellen Conroy Kennedy. In *Lyrical and Critical Essays*, edited by Philip Thody. New York: Vintage Books, 1970.
- Chow, Kai-Wing. *Publishing, Culture, and Power in Early Modern China*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004.
- Chung Chai-sik. “Chōng Tojōn: “Architect of Yi Dynasty Government and Ideology.” In *The Rise of Neo-Confucianism in Korea*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Jahyun Kim Haboush. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Coleman, Simon. “Continuous Conversion? The Rhetoric, Practice, and Rhetorical Practice of Charismatic Protestant Conversion.” In *The Anthropology of Religious Conversion*, edited by Robert T. Anderson, Diane Austin-broos, Thomas K. Brown and Andrew Buckser. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub Inc, 2003.
- Coleridge, Henry James, ed. *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*. London: Burns and Oates, 1912.
- Collcutt, Martin. *Five Mountains: The Rinzai Zen Monastic Institution in Medieval Japan*. Cambridge: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University Press, 1981.
- Como, Michael. *Shōtoku: Ethnicity, Ritual, and Violence in the Japanese Buddhist Tradition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.



- de Bary, Wm. Theodore *The Message of the Mind in Neo-Confucianism*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- . “A Plan for the Prince: The ‘Ming-I Tai-Fang Lu of Huang Tsung-Hsi, Translated and Explained.” PhD diss., Columbia University, 1953.
- de Bary, Wm. Theodore, Donald Keene, George Tanabe, and Paul Varley, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times through the Sixteenth Century* New York: Columbia University Press, 2002.
- de Bary, Wm. Theodore, Carol Gluck, and Arthur E. Tiedemann, eds. *Sources of Japanese Tradition: 1600 to 2000*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.
- Deuchler, Martina. *The Confucian Transformation of Korea: A Study of Society and Ideology*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 1995.
- Dilworth, David. “Jitsugaku as an Ontological Conception: Continuities and Discontinuities in Early and Mid-Tokugawa Thought.” In *Principle and Practicality: Essays in Neo-Confucianism and Practical Learning*, edited by Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- Dore, Ronald P. *Education in Tokugawa Japan*. Berkeley: Berkeley: University of California Press, 1965.
- Elman, Benjamin A. *A Cultural History of Civil Examinations in Late Imperial China*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000.
- Frois, Luis. *Nihonshi*. Translated by Matsuda Kiichi and Kawasaki Momota. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1977.
- Gardner, K. B. “Two Early Printed Book from Japan.” *The British Museum Quarterly* 22, no. 1/2 (1960): 18-20.
- Genjō Masayoshi. “Chihō bushi no bungei kyōju: bunka to keizai no kōkan.” In *Kuge to buke - Sono hikaku bunmeishi-teki kōsatsu*, edited by Murai Yasuhiko. Kyoto: Shibunkaku Shuppan, 1995.
- Gerhart, Karen M. “Tokugawa Authority and Chinese Exemplars: The Teikan Zusetsu Murals of Nagoya Castle.” *Monumenta Nipponica* 52, no. 1 (1997): 1-34.
- Gernet, Jacques. *China and the Christian Impact*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985.
- Gotō Yōichi. “Kumazawa Banzan no shōgai to shisō keisei.” In *Kumazawa Banzan*, edited by Gotō Yōichi and Tomoeda Ryūtarō. NST. Vol. 30, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1971.
- Graham-Dixon, Andrew. *Renaissance*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999.

- Han Yǒng'u. *Wangcho ūi sŏlkyeja Chŏng Tojŏn*. Seoul: Chisik Sanŏpsa, 1999.
- Hankins, James. "Humanism and the Origins of Modern Political Thought." In *The Cambridge Companion to Renaissance Humanism*, edited by Jill Kraye. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Ho, Ping-Ti. *Ladder of Success in Imperial China: Aspects of Social Mobility 1368-1911*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.
- Hongō Takamori, and Fukaya Katsumi. *Kinsei shisō-ron*. Tokyo: Yūhikaku, 1981.
- Hori Isao. *Hayashi Razan*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1964.
- Ichikawa Mototarō. *Nihon Jukyō-shi*. Vol. 3, Tokyo: Kyūko Shoin, 1992.
- Imaeda, Aishin. "Rinzai Sect." In *A History of Japanese Religion*, edited by Kazuo Kasahara. Tokyo: Kosei, 2004.
- Imanaka Kanji. *Kinsei Nihon seiji shisōshi no seiritsu*. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1972.
- Inoguchi Atsushi, and Matano Tarō. *Fujiwara Seika Matsunaga Sekigo*. Tokyo: Meitoku Shuppan, 1982.
- Inoue Tetsujirō. *Nihon Shushigaku-ha no tetsugaku*. Tokyo: Fuzanbō, 1905.
- Ishida Ichirō. "Zenki bakufu taisei no ideorogi to Shushigaku-ha no shisō." In *Fujiwara Seika Hayashi Razan*, edited by Ishida Ichirō and Kanaya Osamu. NST. Vol. 28, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975.
- Ivanhoe, Philip J. *Ethics in the Confucian Tradition: The Thought of Mengzi and Wang Yangming*. Indianapolis: Hackett Pub Co Inc, 2002.
- Kasaya Kazuhiko. *Bushido to Nihon-gata nōryoku shugi*. Tokyo: Shinchōsha, 2005.
- Katsumata Shizuo. "Sengoku-hō." In *Nihon rekishi*, edited by Ōtsu Tōru, Sakurai Eiji, Fujii Shōji, Yoshida Yutaka and Ri Sonsi. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1978.
- Kawase Kazuma. *Ashikaga Gakkō no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Kōdansha, 1974.
- . *Gozan-ban no kenkyū*. 2 vols. Vol. 1, Tokyo: Nihon Koshoseki Shōkyōkai, 1970.
- Kawashima, Fujiya. *What Is Yangban?: A Legacy for Modern Korea*. Seoul: Yonsei University Press, 2002.
- Kim Tewan. *Kyōngyŏn: Wang ūi kongbu*. Seoul: Yōksa Bipyōng-sa, 2011.
- Kōchiken Kyōikukai. *Tani Jichū*. Kochi: Kōchiken Kyōikukai, 1936.
- Kōjirō Yoshikawa. *Jinsai Sorai Norinaga : Three Classical Philologists of Mid-Tokugawa Japan*. Translated by Kikuchi Yūji. Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, 1983.

- Kōyama Kyōdoshi Hensan Inikai. *Kōyama kyōdoshi*. Koyama: Kōyama Kyōdoshi Hensan Inikai, 1997.
- Kristeller, Paul Oskar. *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains*. New York: Harper Torchbooks 1961.
- Kuroda, Toshio. "The Imperial Law and the Buddhist Law." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 23, no. 3-4 (1996): 271-85.
- Kurozumi, Makoto. "Introduction to "the Nature of Early Tokugawa Confucianism"." *Journal of Japanese Studies* 20, no. 2 (1994): 337-75.
- Kwak Chōngrye. "Aknok Hō Sōng kwa Edo Yuhak ūi barūng." *Ōmun Yōnku* 147 (2010): 411-37.
- Liu, Kwang-Ching. "Introduction." In *Orthodoxy in Late Imperial China*, edited by Kwang-Ching Liu. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Maeda Ichirō. *Nihon kinsei shisōshi kenkyū*. Tokyo: Bun'ichi Sōgō Shuppan, 1980.
- Mannheim, Karl. *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*. Translated by Louis Wirth and Edward Shils. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., LTD., 1936.
- Maruyama Masao. "Eigoban eno chosha no jobun." In *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2004.
- . *Nihon seiji shisōshi kenkyū*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 1956.
- Minamoto Ryōen. *Kinsei shoki no zitsugaku shisō no kenkyū*. Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1980.
- Morimoto Junichirō. *Nihon shisōshi*. 2 vols. Vol. 2, Tokyo: Shinnihon Shuppansha, 1982.
- Murai Shōsuke. *Higashi Ajia ōkan: kanshi to gaikō*. Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1995.
- Murakami Tsuneo, and Shin Kisu. *Jusha Kang Hang to Nihon*. Tokyo: Akashi Shoten, 1991.
- Muro Kyūsō. *Kenzan hisaku*. Edited by Takimoto Seiichi. NKS. Vol. 2, Tokyo: Nihon Keizai Sōsho Kankōkai, 1923.
- Najita, Tetsuo. *Vision of Virtue in Tokugawa Japan: The Kaitokudō Merchant Academy of Osaka* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.
- Nakada Kaoru. *Hoseishi ronshū*. Vol. 1, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1936.
- Nakae Katsumi. *O-Edo no yakunin*. Tokyo: PHP Kenkyūjo, 2010.
- Nakai, Kate Wildman. "The Naturalization of Confucianism in Tokugawa Japan: The Problem of Sinocentrism." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 40, no. 1 (1980).

- Nakayama Kyūshirō. *Seidō ryakushi*. Tokyo: Ōzorasha, 1998.
- Naramoto Tatsuya. *Nihon no shijuku*. Kyoto: Tankōsha, 1969.
- Ng, Wai-Ming. *The I Ching in Tokugawa Thought and Culture*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2000.
- Nishimura Tenshū. *Nihon Sōgaku-shi* Tokyo: Asahi Shinbunsha, 1951.
- Nitobe Inazō. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*. London: The Floating Press, 2008.
- Nomura Maki. "Kinsei nihon ni okeru jubutsu icchiron to Sono denkai." *Hokudai Hōgaku Ronshū* 55, no. 3 (2004): 908-26.
- Nosco, Peter. "Introduction: Neo-Confucianism and Tokugawa Discourse." In *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, edited by Peter Nosco. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- Ogawa Kandō, ed. *Kangakusha denki oyobi chojutsu shūran*. Tokyo: Meicho Kankōkai, 1977.
- Ōkuwa Hitoshi. *Nihon kinsei no shisō to Bukkyō*. Tokyo: Hōzōkan, 1989.
- Ooms, Herman. "Neo-Confucianism and the Formation of Early Tokugawa Ideology: Contours of a Problem." In *Confucianism and Tokugawa Culture*, edited by Peter Nosco. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- . *Tokugawa Ideology: Early Constructs, 1570-1680* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985.
- Ōta Seikyū. *Fujiwara Seika*. Tokyo: Kōbunkan, 1985.
- Palais, James B. "Confucianism and the Aristocratic/Officialic Balance in Korea." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 44, no. 2 (1984).
- Paramore, Kiri. "Confucianism Versus Feudalism: The Shōheizaka Academy and Late Tokugawa Reform." In *Uncharted Waters: Intellectual Life in the Edo Period, Essays in Honour of W.J. Boot*, edited by Anna Beerens and Mark Teeuwen. Leiden: Brill Academic Publishers, 2012.
- Peel, J. D. Y. "Conversion and Tradition in Two African Societies: Ijebu and Buganda." *Past & Present* 77 (1977): 108-41.
- Platt, Brian. *Burning and Building: Schooling and State Formation in Japan, 1750-1890*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2004.
- . *Understanding Religious Conversion*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Rubinger, Richard. *Popular Literacy in Early Modern Japan*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007.

- Rublack, Ulinka. *Ulinka Rublack, Reformation Europe, New Approaches to European History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Ruppert, Brian. *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Asia Center, 2000.
- Sadri, Ahmad. *Max Weber's Sociology of Intellectuals*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Sagara Tōru. *Nihon no Jukyō*. 2 vols. Vol. 1, Tokyo: Perikansha, 1992.
- Sansom, George. *A History of Japan to 1334*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958.
- Shibata Jun. *Shisōshi ni okeru kinsei*. Kyoto: Shibunkaku, 1991.
- Shimada Kenji. *Shushigaku to Yōmeigaku*. Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1967.
- Skinner, Quentin. "A Reply to My Critics." In *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, edited by James Tully. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.
- Smith, Henry D. "The History of the Book in Edo and Paris." In *Edo & Paris*, edited by James L. McClain, John M. Meriman and Ugawa Kaoru. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994.
- Sonehara Satoshi. *Shinkun Ieyasu no tanjō: Tōshōgū to gongen-sama*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2008.
- Sōng Hejun. "Twegye ūi sōnbi jōngsin i Ilbon e kichin yōnghyang." In *Hankuk ūi sōnbi jōngsin*, edited by Kim Sanghun. Busan: Twegeyha Busan Yōnkuwon, 2012.
- Spae, Joseph. "Buddhism as Viewed by Two Tokugawa Confucianists: Ito Jinsai's Letter to Doko and Its Refutation by Sato Naokata." *Monumenta Nipponica* 5, no. 2 (1942).
- Susser, Bernad. "The Toyotomi Regim and the Daimyo." In *The Bakufu in Japanese History*, edited by Jeffrey P. Mass and William B. Hauser. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985.
- Suzuki Hirō. "Kinsei shijuku no shiteki kōsatsu." *Yokohama Kokuritsu Daigaku kyōiku kiyō* 1 (1962).
- Suzuki Ken'ichi. *Hayashi Razan nenpukō*. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1999.
- Suzuki Miyao. *Seidō monogatari: Yushima Seidō ryakushi*. Tokyo: Shibunkai, 1989.
- Takahashi Fumihiro. "Jukyō to Bukkyō no ronsō." In *Nihon shisō ronsō-shi*, edited by Imai Jun and Ozawa Tomio. Tokyo: Perikansha, 1996.
- Takebayashi Kan'ichi, ed. *Kangakusha denki shūsei*. Tokyo: Azuma Shuppan, 1997.

- Takeda Kazuo. *Gozan to chūsei no shakai*. Tokyo: Dōseisha, 2007.
- Tamamuro Fumio. "Sūden no shōgai." In *Seikai no dōsha Tenkai Sūden*, edited by Tamamuro Fumio. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004.
- Taylor, Rodney Leon. *The Religious Dimensions of Confucianism*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990.
- Tesshin, Suzuki, ed. *Suzuki Shōzan dōjin zenshū*. Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1962.
- Toby, Ronald P. "Kinsei Shotō Tai-Min No Ichi Gaikō Monjo Shohon No Keifu: Gosha, Godoku, Goki No Keifu to Nihon-Gata Ka'i Ron." *Tōkyō Daigaku Shiryō Hensanjo kenkyū kiyō* 13 (2003): 60-81.
- Tsuji Zennosuke. *Nihon Bukkyō-shi no kenkyū*. Vol. 3, Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1984.
- Tucker, John Allen. "Two Mencian Political Notions in Tokugawa Japan." *Philosophy East and West* 47, no. 2 (1997): 233-53.
- Unoda Shōya. "Jusha." In *Chishiki to gakumon o ninau hitobito*, edited by Yokota Fuyuhiko. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007.
- Urai Shōmyō. "Higashi Hiezan Kan'eji no seiritsu to Tenkai." In *Seikai no dōsha Tenkai Sūden*, edited by Tamamuro Fumio. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004.
- Wajima Yoshio. *Chūsei no Jugaku*. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1996.
- Watanabe Hiroshi. *Kinsei Nihon shakai to Sōgaku*. Tokyo: Tōkyō Daigaku Shuppankai, 2010.
- Welter, Albert. *Zen Ritual: Studies of Zen Buddhist Theory in Practice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- White, Hayden. *The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- Wilcox, Donald J. *In Search of God & Self: Renaissance and Reformation Thought*. Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, 1987.
- Wolfe, Alan. *An Intellectual in Public*. Ann Arbor University of Michigan Press, 2003.
- Yamamuro Kyōko. *Ōgon taikō: yume o enjita tenkabito*. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1992.
- Yamashita, Samuel Hideo. "The Early Life and Thought of Itō Jinsai." *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies* 43, no. 2 (1983): 453-80.
- Yi Tonghi. *Tong Asia Chujahak pigyo yōnku*. Daegu: Keimyung University Press, 2006.
- Yokota Fuyuhiko. "Shomotsu o meguru hitobito." In *Chishiki to gakumon o ninau hitobito*, edited by Yokota Fuyuhiko. Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2007.